United Nations A/S-30/PV.1

General Assembly

Thirtieth special session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Temporary President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the Chair of the delegation of Denmark

The Temporary President: I declare open the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

As representatives are aware, this special session is being held pursuant to resolutions 67/193 of 20 December 2012, 69/200 of 18 December 2014 and 70/181 of 17 December 2015. Pursuant to paragraph 45 of resolution 67/193, the special session will review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Temporary President: I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/S-30/2)

The Temporary President: I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/S-30/2, concerning Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee

The Temporary President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

In accordance with precedents, the Credentials Committee of the thirtieth special session should have the same membership as that of the seventieth regular session of the Assembly, namely, Argentina, Austria, Barbados, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United States of America.

If there is no objection, I shall consider the Credentials Committee constituted accordingly.

It was so decided.

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The Temporary President: In that connection, may I invite the attention of the members of the Assembly to a note verbale from the Secretary-General, dated 4 February 2016, in which it is stated that credentials should be issued for all representatives to the special session in accordance with rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I would urge all members to submit the credentials of their representatives to the Secretary-General as soon as possible.

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Election of the President

The Temporary President: I now invite the Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session.

In that connection, it has been proposed that the President of the seventieth regular session, His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of the Kingdom of Denmark, be elected by acclamation as President at the thirtieth special session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to elect Mr. Mogens Lykketoft President of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Temporary President: I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft and invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Lykketoft took the Chair.

Statement by Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session

The President: I am thankful for my election as President of the General Assembly at this special session. Before we begin, let me extend my sincere condolences and the solidarity of the General Assembly to the Governments and people of Ecuador and Japan, who have been deeply affected by deadly earthquakes over the past weekend. Our thoughts are with all those who lost loved ones and, indeed, all those who are working hard at the relief efforts.

It is a great honour to welcome all participants to the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem. I wish to thank Minister Løhde for presiding over the opening of this session. I also wish to thank the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna for leading the preparations for this special session. I recognize the commitment and engagement of all that resulted in the document we have before us today (see A/S-30/4).

When young people see their health deteriorate, their life opportunities evaporate and their families disintegrate; when those seeking treatment are stigmatized or discriminated against, and HIV/AIDS sufferers are marginalized; when poor farmers struggle to find alternative sources of income and indigenous peoples face challenges to their centuries-old practices; when organized criminals bring in immense profits, attract disenfranchised youth and take over and destroy communities; when courageous politicians and officers are gunned down, others are corrupted and the entire State-apparatus is undermined; when millions are imprisoned for possession, including of small quantities, and others are executed for trafficking; when supply and demand affect societies differently and solutions in one country result in problems in another; when those who need controlled substances for medical purposes cannot have access to them; when all of this and more comes together, we have the world drug problem — a problem that demands international action; a problem that can be overcome.

The presence and engagement of so many distinguished representatives here today is a show of commitment to doing just that. A little over six months ago, many of them gathered in this very Hall to embrace the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and to send a signal to people everywhere that the transformation towards a more sustainable and just world was under way. Today, bearing in mind the linkages between the two, we can deliver a similar message that, together, we can more effectively address the world drug problem. With openness and a willingness to learn, we can understand better that which separates us and rally around that which unites us. We can build upon actions that have proven to work.

During these three days in the plenary, round tables and side events, we will discuss the great challenges associated with this issue and how best to address them. No society can claim to be completely free from the dire consequences that illicit drugs bring, or to have no relation to many causes, and no country can

deny that addressing this problem is a common and shared responsibility.

Clearly, this is a problem with many dimensions, from human rights to sustainable development, from health impacts to the perspective of the drug users, and from corruption to organized crime. Tackling illicit drugs therefore requires a long-term, integrated and multidisciplinary approach. It also calls for coherence among our public health, social and education sectors, sustainable development and law enforcement policies, together with cooperation on the local, regional and international levels, as well as multilateral responses. It requires that consideration be given to all the major causes, consequences and related aspects such as respect for proportionality, human rights and the rule of law; considerations regarding the well-being of society and of the individual; and measures to bring about social stability and security, while striving for comprehensive and balanced policy interventions.

Furthermore, the past has shown that we can equip ourselves better for this challenge if we listen to each other as Member States, because every country experiences this problem and applies solutions in its own way. We must also listen to civil society, the scientific community and academia, parliamentarians, youth, women, children and affected communities. I recognize and applaud the role played by each of these stakeholders in the preparatory process.

Notwithstanding the ever-increasing efforts and progress made by States, relevant international organizations and United Nations entities, as well as civil society, the world drug problem continues to affect the lives of millions of people and to undermine sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions. It is indeed time to evaluate the progress achieved since the last session, to reflect on new approaches and to address evolving and emerging challenges. I hope therefore that the next three days will be an opportunity to look ahead to where we would like to be by 2019, when the current Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem comes to an end.

The special session on the world drug problem is now open. I sincerely hope that it will provide a space for a productive discussion based on the document prepared by the CND that we are about to adopt. In doing so, I hope that it helps us to address the complex world drug problem more effectively and humanely.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to address this meeting of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem, on behalf of the Secretary-General, who is travelling.

The special session provides an opportunity to assess the achievements, shortcomings and challenges of the international drug-control regime. The world drug problem affects virtually every nation and all sectors of society. I am sure that everyone here thought about the victims and tragedies created by this scourge when we observed a minute of silence just now. Drug trafficking and organized criminal networks fuel violence and feed corruption. They weaken institutions and the rule of law. As the Security Council has recognized, profits from drug-trafficking are funding terrorism and violent extremism in today's world.

Drug policies have serious human rights implications. Some people dare not seek the care they need, fearing punishment or forced treatment. Drug abuse results in tragic and terrible human costs to users and, not least, to their families and communities. It kills and injures millions of people. It is linked to the spread of HIV, tuberculosis and hepatitis. It is vital that we engage at the highest level to provide care and treatment to those affected. We must end the cynical exploitation for profit of the most vulnerable people in our societies.

The ultimate goal of the international drug control conventions is to ensure the health and welfare of humankind. In applying them, we must balance security and public safety concerns with considerations of health, human rights and development. We all know that some aspects of the drug agenda are sensitive and controversial. We also know that some countries and regions have suffered more than others. It is therefore important that we listen to each other and learn from one another's experiences, not least about how people's well-being is affected.

I commend Member States for their informed and wide-ranging discussions in the lead-up to this special session and for their dedication to reaching a consensus on a draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1,

annex). I thank the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and especially Ambassador Shamaa, Chair of the Board of the Commission, for their work on this important document. I would also like to thank civil society around the world for its critical contributions to moving this important agenda forward. Addressing the world drug problem requires the active and continued involvement of all Governments, all sectors of society and, I would argue strongly, all parts of the United Nations system. Now is the time for implementing what has been agreed on after serious and productive negotiations.

It is encouraging that Member States are committed to treating and rehabilitating people with drug-use disorders. Prevention and treatment require human-rights-based approaches adapted to the needs of individuals. We must, for instance, recognize that people in need should have access to vital medicines. Drug policies should make use of all the tools of the conventions and agreements on drugs, but also of those on corruption, organized crime and terrorism. At the same time, respect for human rights and accountability in operations aimed at enforcing the law are critical. That means considering alternatives to conviction or punishment when appropriate. It means sentencing those convicted in proportion to their crimes. And in our view, it means refraining from applying the death penalty, thereby conforming to human rights obligations.

Poverty and inequality drive illicit drug production and use. The best prevention policy is working decisively and universally to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which was so skilfully negotiated and endorsed in September of last year. We have a new tool in our hands that we must use. Countering drug-related crime and corruption is critical if we are to achieve stable societies and effective institutions, which form the foundation for sustainable development. Drugs not only threaten development and lives lived in dignity, they also threaten stability and security.

The challenges posed by the world drug problem require a global response that is simultaneously effective, compassionate and humane, alongside parallel national action, of course. We need to mobilize our efforts and good forces on that basis and in that spirit. Looking forward to 2019, we should focus on new challenges and threats, including the emergence of new psychoactive substances. The States Members of the United Nations, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and the whole United Nations system must respond in a timely, effective and flexible fashion to those and other looming dangers. We must base our decisions on research, data and scientific evidence, and we must not shy away from new ideas and approaches, even if they may sometimes challenge traditional assumptions.

The health and welfare of people around the world should be our overarching objective, in the spirit of "We the peoples"— the first three words of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the peoples whom we are here to serve. I encourage everyone here to continue the debate as openly and inclusively as possible as we advance towards the conclusion of the 10-year period established in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The draft outcome document before us represents a good basis from which to take concrete steps forward both nationally and internationally. Again, I congratulate Member States on reaching a consensus outcome at this critical stage of our work. Let us make the most of this special session to set a course for policies that support our common aspirations for healthy people, peaceful and just societies, and a better future for all.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Galuška, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Mr. Galuška (Commission on Narcotic Drugs): It is an honour to address the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session dedicated to the world drug problem. As the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its fifty-ninth session, I had the opportunity during the preparatory process in Vienna to witness the intensive efforts and commitment of all — Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations and civil society. This special session is the culmination of those efforts, and I look forward to our discussions here.

In 2009, Member States adopted the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and set a series of important goals for 2019. This special session represents one of the milestones of that 10-year period. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs is the United Nations organ with the primary responsibility for drug

control matters. I am pleased to say that the debates held over recent years have enriched its work to an unprecedented degree. Vienna has become a forum to discuss the world drug problem in any and all of its multiple dimensions. Those dimensions include the prevention and treatment of drug-use disorders; human rights; crime and violence; the availability of drugs for medical purposes; the value of scientific research, evidence and data; new psychoactive substances; alternative development and socioeconomic issues; international cooperation and the provision of adequate resources.

Owing to the preparatory process for this special session, the CND has been focusing intensified discussions on sharing information on how to effectively implement programmes and policies on the ground, taking into account the very different nature the world drug problem presents in different parts of the world. The discussions among Member States have been enriched by the wide participation of other relevant stakeholders from around the world.

At the most recent meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held just last month, I watched more than 1,800 participants from Governments, United Nations entities and specialized organizations, intergovernmental and regional organizations, civil society, the scientific community, academia and youth sharing information on the various challenges posed by the world drug problem. There were 74 side events held on topics ranging from the flexibility of the three international drug control conventions and legislative responses to new psychoactive substances; from addressing tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS as a public health priority and considering alternative livelihoods to the use of the darknet for drug trafficking.

In Vienna, the Commission continues to act in a spirit of consensus. Through consensus, the Commission contributes to substantive dialogues among Governments and fosters international cooperation to effectively address and counter the world drug problem, despite differences in national legislative approaches and policies and despite the various challenges faced by people around the world. I welcome the constructive engagement of Member States during negotiations, which recently resulted not only in the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex) but also in the adoption of important and innovative resolutions on, inter alia, proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences, networking within the scientific community, mainstreaming the gender perspective into drug policies, promoting standards for the treatment of drug-use disorders, and the continuing need to target new psychoactive substances and amphetamine-type stimulants.

Recently, the Commission enhanced its work following an increased number of recommendations received from the World Health Organization on the scheduling of substances pursuant to the international drug control conventions. To that end, I very much welcome the productive cooperation among the Commission, the World Health Organization and the International Narcotics Control Board. The multiple dimensions of the world drug problem and enhanced cooperation among the various stakeholders are also reflected in the draft outcome document, adopted by the Commission and transmitted for adoption at this special session. The document contains numerous calls for Member States to share with the Commission information, lessons learned, experiences and best practices.

In the outcome document, Member States commit themselves to taking the necessary steps to implement the operational recommendations, in close partnership with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, and to share with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs timely information on the progress made in that implementation. The Commission stands ready to provide support to Member States in their implementation of the recommendations, in follow-ups to this special session and leading up to 2019 and beyond, by continuing to work in an inclusive and comprehensive manner with all stakeholders with whom the Commission has been engaged during the preparatory process.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all Member States for their endless efforts to address and counter the world drug problem. I also thank the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for providing substantive and organizational support to the Commission. Lastly, I thank all stakeholders who have been contributing to and enriching the discussions held at the Commission for their willingness and perseverance in sharing lessons learned, experiences and views to assist Member States to have the information necessary to implement a truly comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to the complex and multifaceted world drug problem.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime): The General Assembly's thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem, is a culmination of years of intensive groundwork and inclusive and frank debate, bringing together Governments, United Nations entities, scientists and civil society. It has been an honour for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support the wide-ranging preparations led by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). If there is a message that emerges from the many discussions held, formal and informal, and from the substantive contributions provided by United Nations partners and numerous intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations, it is that the global drug policy must put people first.

Putting people first means reaffirming the cornerstone principles of the global drug control system and placing emphasis on the health and welfare of humankind, which is one of the founding purposes of the international drug control conventions. Putting people first means creating balanced approaches based on health and human rights and promoting the safety and security of all our societies. Putting people first means looking to the future and recognizing that drug policies must above all protect the potential of young people to foster healthy lifestyles and safe development. Putting people first ties responses to the world drug problem to the broader goals of the groundbreaking 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

Putting people first means acknowledging our common responsibility with respect to the world drug problem in all its forms and manifestations. That requires us to assist countries with limited resources and capacities to address the threat to peace, security, development and health posed by illicit drugs, including through support for alternative livelihoods, building accountable, effective judiciaries, enlarging capacities to tackle supply, and enhancing prevention and treatment services. However, our integrated and balanced approaches to the world drug problem stand little chance of succeeding if stated political commitments are not fully backed by adequate financial resources.

This special session of the General Assembly has provided a critical opportunity at a critical moment to build a more comprehensive and more collective understanding of the challenges we face together. I very much hope that the aspirational recommendations contained in the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex) — which was adopted by consensus by the CND and is now expected to be endorsed by the Assembly — can really help to promote the urgent, united and concerted action we need so much.

As a lead entity in the United Nations system in addressing the challenges posed by the illicit drugs, UNODC remains dedicated to working with the international community to put agreed commitments into practice. We count on the political and financial support of Member States to enable us to do so effectively and efficiently. In close cooperation with our partners, UNODC will continue to support States through our global and field office programmes, which are informed by our extensive on-the-ground experience and research expertise, and to promote integrated responses at the global, interregional, regional and country levels.

We remain fully committed to helping Member States to ensure access to controlled drugs in order to relieve pain and suffering; to promote prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration approaches rooted in evidence, science, public health and human rights; to stop criminals and to prevent and counter illicit cultivation, production and traffic. We use all the tools at our disposal, as provided by the relevant conventions concerning drugs, corruption, transnational organized crime and terrorism, as well as the relevant United Nations norms, standards and guidelines to tackle related organized crime, money laundering and illicit financial flows. Member States can count on UNODC's support in the follow-up to the special session through the 2019 review and beyond.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to Mr. Werner Sipp, President of the International Narcotics Control Board.

Mr. Sipp (International Narcotics Control Board): It is an honour to address the Assembly today at this special session on the world drug problem in my capacity as President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). It is fitting that this landmark thirtieth special session should address the global drug problem, the effects of which pervade all of humankind, all regions and all spectra of our societies.

I acknowledge the extensive preparations that have been under way for this special session, including by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Yet the work has only just begun. Deliberations over the next three days will be aimed at reviewing progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and at assessing the achievements made and challenges faced in countering the world drug problem.

The General Assembly has recognized that this special session is an opportunity for a high-level and wide-ranging discussion in the lead-up to the target date of 2019, in order to further implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Indeed, the Secretary-General has encouraged Member States to use this year's special session "to conduct a wide-ranging and open debate that considers all options".

Those present have an important task ahead; they must take stock of the accomplishments and shortcomings in drug control and exchange best practices in addressing the world drug problem. The special session will map the way forward in drug policy. The INCB has contributed to this process by clarifying and highlighting the principles of the relevant conventions, identifying shortcomings in their implementation, and by making specific recommendations based upon those conventions.

The INCB's assessment of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration is ambivalent. Remarkable successes have been achieved through implementation of the international drug control system. For example, due to the control of the licit international trade in scheduled substances, diversions from the licit trade to the illicit market have been significantly reduced. In the past decade, efforts have been made in many countries to establish programmes for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse and to reduce the negative consequences of drug abuse. Finally, international cooperation in drug-related matters has been strengthened.

However, some of the targets of the 2009 Political Declaration have still not been met. The availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes is still not satisfactory. Globally, the illicit demand for and supply of drugs has not been significantly reduced, and we are facing the continuing emergence of new psychoactive substances. Moreover, some of the fundamental principles of the conventions and the Political Declarations are not being adequately implemented.

In the coming days, those present will have the opportunity to agree upon and commit to a course of action. In just three years' time, in 2019, the international community will review conclusively the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action and the commitments made at this special session. The next task for each representative here, upon return to his or her capital, will be to transform political will into the implementation of those commitments. In launching this call to action, allow me to emphasize that the framework for such implementation is already available — the three international drug control conventions and the Political Declarations. I will briefly highlight a few key areas where the action of the international community is required.

The promotion of the health and welfare of humankind is the ultimate goal of the drug control conventions. To that end, the State parties formulated the conventions with the aim of ensuring the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their illicit cultivation and manufacture, diversion, trafficking and abuse.

There exists a grave imbalance in the availability of and access to medicines containing controlled substances. About three quarters of the global population do not have proper access to pain relief treatment. INCB has been calling on countries to close the global pain divide and ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In our 2015 report on availability, we made specific recommendations to Governments, and we stand ready to assist them.

Historically, drug control focused on supply reduction, but there has been growing recognition of the importance of implementing the treaties in a comprehensive, integrated and balanced manner and with full respect for human rights. Such an approach is essential to addressing the complex and multifaceted nature of the drug problem. For example, the promotion of alternative livelihoods is essential if law enforcement and eradication efforts are to be effective in the long term. Promoting social cohesion through a variety of community-based services can make a significant contribution to addressing the drug problem, especially in marginalized communities.

Investing in demand reduction — including primary prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of drug users — promotes public health and well-being and also helps to reduce the potential number of users. In fact, demand reduction is perhaps the best form of supply reduction. Also, demand reduction programmes and services are cost effective in terms of reduced crime and health-care costs. The prevention of drug abuse, especially among young people, must remain the primary objective of drug control policy and practice. Preventing and reducing the adverse health and social consequences associated with drug abuse, such as the transmission of HIV among people who inject drugs, should also be an essential element of a comprehensive and balanced approach.

The evolution of drug control policy and practice in many countries over recent years, from an approach relying primarily on criminal justice and incarceration to a more health-oriented approach, is welcome. That is entirely consistent with the conventions, which provide States with some flexibility to adopt measures, such as treatment and rehabilitation, as an alternative to or in addition to criminal sanctions for offenders, mainly those suffering from drug dependency. Indeed, the international drug control conventions require proportionate responses to drug-related offences. While the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 states that "serious offences shall be liable to adequate punishment, particularly by imprisonment", there is no treaty obligation to incarcerate drug users who have committed minor offences. The conventions provide for flexibility on the part of States in determining appropriate sanctions, including non-punitive or non-custodial measures, for instance for drug possession for personal use.

However, flexibility has limits. It does not extend to any non-medical use of drugs. Recent legislative developments in some countries that permit and regulate the non-medical use of controlled substances, in particular cannabis, are in clear contravention of the conventions. They defy the international consensus upon which international cooperation depends. The States parties to the conventions have a responsibility to address that challenge.

In recent years, we have seen a number of new drug control issues that, although not foreseen in the conventions, have to be and can be addressed within the framework of the international cooperation they provide. New psychoactive substances pose a problem for the international community in view of their continued emergence and transient nature. The INCB is working with the authorities of Member States to facilitate the sharing of information on incidents involving those substances. The Board has issued guidance to eight Governments in regard to the establishment of partnerships with the private sector for the control of precursor chemicals and to help address the emergence of so-called designer precursors. But no solution to the problem of new psychoactive substances has been found as yet.

This special session of the General Assembly is a timely opportunity to reaffirm commitment to implementing policies and practices grounded in the fundamental principles of the three conventions and the Political Declarations of 1998 and 2009, which are the principle of a balanced approach, the principle of shared responsibility, the principle of proportionality, and respect for human rights. Let me recall that the conventions never called for a war on drugs. Some of the policies that exist in some countries — and which are associated with militarized law enforcement, disregard for human rights, overincarceration, the denial of medically appropriate treatment and inhumane or disproportionate approaches — are not in accordance with the principles of the conventions.

The future of the global drug policy is not a false dichotomy between a so-called war on drugs, on the one hand, and legalization and/or regulation of non-medical use, on the other. It is also unnecessary to seek so-called new approaches. In fact, we do not really need new approaches to the global drug policy. Quite to the contrary, what we need is to better implement the principles of the drug-control treaties, which require a balanced and comprehensive approach where health and welfare are at the core of the policy.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the many individuals working to address the drug problem in all its facets in all countries of the world. Their efforts are key to promoting the health and welfare of humankind, the ultimate aims of our work. The International Narcotics Control Board looks forward to continuing its cooperation with Governments and civil society with a view to assisting Member States in improving the drug-control situation worldwide.

In closing, allow me to recall the collective commitment of those present to the principle of common and shared responsibility in addressing the world

drug problem. You have a personal and professional responsibility to implement the commitments made in this Hall and to prevent harm to individuals and society arising from the world drug problem. I wish members of the Assembly much success in their worthy endeavour.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to Ms. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization.

Ms. Chan (World Health Organization): The world drug problem is a prime concern for the World Health Organization (WHO), the lead United Nations agency for health. But I have to thank all Member States for according high attention to public health in the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex).

The health and social harm caused by the illicit use of psychoactive drugs is enormous. The harm includes direct damage to the physical and mental health of users and dramatically reduces the length and quality of their lives. Drug use harms families and communities through crimes against property and people. It contributes to traffic and domestic injuries, child abuse, gender-based sexual violence and other forms of violence. Members of the Assembly know the global statistics quite well. They do not need to be reminded. Nonetheless, let me share the fact that an estimated 27 million people have drug-use disorders. More than 400,000 of them die each year. Injection-drug use accounts for an estimated 30 per cent of new HIV infections outside sub-Saharan Africa. Injection-drug use contributes significantly to epidemics of hepatitis B and hepatitis C in all regions of the world. About 10 million people who inject drugs now are infected with hepatitis C. Do members of the Assembly know how expensive it is to treat hepatitis C? It is very expensive; even the richest countries in the world cannot afford it.

In the view of WHO, drug policies that focus almost exclusively on the use of the criminal justice system need to be broadened by embracing a public-health approach. A public-health approach starts with science and starts with the evidence. It tells us several things.

First, drug use can be prevented. Drug-use disorders can be treated. Drug dependence that contributes to crime can be diminished. People with drug dependence can be helped and returned to productive roles in society. WHO promotes a comprehensive package of interventions to achieve those objectives. The evidence shows it works. Some of the most effective interventions aim to reduce the harm associated with the injection of drugs. WHO recommends the provision of sterilized injection equipment through needle and syringe programmes. WHO recommends opiate substitute therapy as the most effective treatment options for people dependent on opiates.

The evidence shows that such programmes benefit not only individuals but also entire communities, because they reduce crime and public disorder. I have a little story about that. I used to work in a city called Hong Kong. We had one of the world's most robust, liberal harm-reduction programmes. We called it the methadone replacement programme, and I would like to point out that after it was implemented, petty crime fell throughout the city. There were no more snatchings of women's gold necklaces by drug addicts driven to commit such petty crimes to feed their addiction. I speak from personal experience and I would encourage Governments to consider such programmes. They are not easy, but they work.

WHO is engaged with another dimension of the world drug problem that needs urgent attention. The international drug control conventions place a dual obligation on Governments: to prevent abuse, diversion and trafficking, but also to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. Many controlled substances play a critical role in medical care — in pain relief and in anaesthesia, surgery and the treatment of mental disorders. Unfortunately, the obligation to prevent abuse has received far more attention that the obligation to ensure availability for medical care. WHO estimates that 80 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with zero access, or very little, to controlled medicines used for relieving moderate-to-severe pain.

As everyone here goes home after adopting the draft outcome document and begins to implement it, I urge all to remember the people, as the Deputy Secretary-General said. We must remember the right of those people to treatment and care — the right of those with cancer, dying in agony for want of pain relief; of those who want to be drug-free but who get no help from health or social services; and of the millions whose use of injected drugs adds HIV or hepatitis to their misery. WHO and its partners, especially my brother agency the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, stand ready to implement the tasks that will be assigned to us during this special session.

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Introduction of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its preparatory work

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Khaled Shamaa, Chair of the Board tasked by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with the preparations for the special session, to introduce the report of the Commission on its preparatory work, contained in document A/S-30/4.

Mr. Shamaa (Commission on Narcotic Drugs): It is a great pleasure to address the Assembly today in my capacity as Chair of the Board established by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and tasked with the preparations for this special session.

During the special session, representatives of Member States, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders will be able to share information and views during the general debate and in five round-table discussions, as well as at a wide variety of other events. Representatives of Member States will have the opportunity to commit to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem in all its complexity and numerous manifestations by recommending operational measures to be taken to improve the health, safety and well-being of all humankind.

Today I have the honour to present the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its preparatory work, as contained in document A/S-30/4. The document reflects the highlights of the past two years of commitment and intense preparatory work on the part of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, acting in an open-ended manner. The Commission embarked on an intensive preparatory process, starting with its fifty-seventh session in March 2014, followed by the Assembly's adoption of resolution 69/200. Fourteen intersessional meetings and four formal special preparatory segments were held on the margins of the Commission's fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions. In addition to formal meetings, a series of informal events was held throughout the two-year period. They included special events, consultations, informal interactive discussions and other events, in Vienna and elsewhere. We felt it was crucial to hear different perspectives that also reflected different situations, challenges and lessons learned on the ground.

Inclusiveness, openness and substantive information-sharing have been key features of the preparatory process. The Board worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, regional organizations, civil society, the scientific community and, most importantly, young people. The dedication and determination of all stakeholders in their efforts to bring their experiences to the attention of Member States and one another are to be applauded. The statements, outcomes and presentations delivered at all events have been continuously posted on the website dedicated to the preparatory process, which in itself became a repository of in-depth information on approaches to the world drug problem around the globe and has enabled all to contribute to the process.

With regard to the modalities of the special session, a significant moment in the preparations took place in March 2015 at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission with the adoption of its resolution 58/8, containing the recommendations that the General Assembly acted on in its adoption of resolution 70/181. Organizational arrangements for the round tables that will be held during the special session, alongside the plenary meetings, were defined in the Commission's decision 58/16, adopted in December 2015. The modalities mirror the five interactive discussions held in March of last year during the special segment on preparations for the special session, which were also chaired by the members of the Board and supported by a panel consisting of representatives of Member States nominated by the five regional groups, civil society and United Nations entities. The Vienna interactive discussions served as a template for the five round tables that will be held during this special session and that will be dedicated to the same themes. I am greatly looking forward to the round tables and I am sure that the discussion on each topic will be as useful as it proved in Vienna last year.

As for the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex) , the Commission began working on it in early autumn 2015. All the information gathered during the numerous events I have described, along with more than 200 pages of inputs from Member States, served as the substantive foundation for the elements paper that the Board presented on 24 September. During the first phase of negotiations, in the autumn of 2015, Member States focused on defining the main elements. In the second phase, starting in January this year, delegations

built on the elements paper by engaging in intensive, open-ended negotiations on the draft text of an outcome document, shaping its structure and substance. Finally, at its fifty-ninth session, a month ago, the Commission agreed on a draft document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", and decided to transmit it to the special session and recommend its adoption.

The draft outcome document addresses the multiple dimensions of the world drug problem. It contains a comprehensive set of operational recommendations covering prevention and treatment as well as other health-related issues, including the prevention, treatment and care of HIV and AIDS; the issue of the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes; the prevention and countering of drug-related crime and its links with other forms of organized crime; human rights, including the rights of young people, children, women and communities, as well as proportionate and effective policies and responses; evolving challenges, trends and existing circumstances and emerging and persistent problems and threats, including that of new psychoactive substances; strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility; and socioeconomic issues, alternative development and viable economic alternatives.

The preparatory process has demonstrated that there can be no one-size-fits-all approach. The challenges and situations on the ground vary from region to region, within regions and from one country to another. In responding to our shared but differentiated challenges, the document contains important operational recommendations and demonstrates our common determination to address and counter collectively the various aspects of the world drug problem.

All of those challenges require our urgent attention. It is crucial to ensure that the draft outcome document is translated into concrete action on the ground, and I urge Member States, United Nations entities, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders to promote and contribute to its implementation as much as possible by taking all the steps necessary for that. I also urge everyone to share timely information with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on progress made and results achieved in the period leading up to 2019 and beyond.

On behalf of the members of the Board, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, who has provided support and guidance throughout the process and with whom I have had the pleasure to work closely, as well as the President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of Uganda. I would also like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Vladimir Galuška, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-ninth session, as well as his predecessor His Excellency Ambassador Arthayudh Srisamoot of Thailand, Chair of the Commission at its fifty-eighth session, for their cooperation with the Board. I also thank the secretariat of the Commission, which has been at the disposal of the Board, the Commission and delegations throughout the two-year preparatory process, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime generally, through its Executive Director, for its substantive expertise and technical support during the whole process. Finally, I am truly grateful to all the members of the Board for their hard work and commitment throughout the process.

This special session is and must be about human beings. It is our collective responsibility to make sure that our response to the world drug problem in 2016 and beyond is built on international cooperation, solidarity, common and shared responsibility and concerted international action, with the aim of promoting and ensuring the well-being of peoples and societies.

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Organization of the session and adoption of the agenda

The President: In order to expedite the work of the thirtieth special session and in accordance with precedents, it is proposed that the Vice-Presidents of the thirtieth special session shall be the same as those of the seventieth regular session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The President: Likewise, it is proposed that the Chairpersons of the Main Committees of the seventieth regular session shall serve in the same capacity at the thirtieth special session.

May I take it that the Assembly also agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly is thus fully constituted.

I should like to draw the attention of delegations to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See and the State of Palestine, in their capacities as observer States, in the work of the General Assembly. The observers of the Holy See will participate in the work of the thirtieth special session in accordance with Assembly resolution 58/314 of 1 July 2004, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to their intervention. The observers of the State of Palestine will participate in the work of the thirtieth special session in accordance with Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988, 52/250 of 7 July 1998, and 67/19 of 29 November 2012, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to their intervention.

In accordance with resolution 65/276 of 3 May 2011 and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, observers of the European Union will participate in the work of the thirtieth special session with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to their interventions.

I should now like to request the cooperation of representatives on the length of statements. Given the short duration of the special session and in order to hear all the speakers inscribed on the list, it would be appreciated if representatives would keep their statements in the debate as brief as possible. I would like to appeal to representatives to limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group and three minutes when speaking in a national capacity. I strongly encourage speakers to adhere to those time limits.

We now turn to the adoption of the agenda. The provisional agenda of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly is contained in document A/S-30/1. In order to expedite its work, the Assembly may wish to consider the provisional agenda directly in plenary meeting without referring it to the General Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as it appears in document A/S-30/1?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8

Adoption of the final document

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", contained in document A/S-30/L.1. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt it?

The resolution was adopted (resolution S-30/1).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, I would remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sargsyan (Armenia): Armenia joined the consensus on the outcome document of the General Assembly special session (resolution S-30/1, annex), which shapes the strategy for the United Nations to address the world drug problem in full conformity with all of the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. However, my delegation would like to mention that the outcome document has failed to fully and properly reflect those principles and purposes. With all due respect to the Charter, we have to

> "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace".

Armenia will continue to take appropriate measures to strengthen international and regional cooperation to combat the world drug problem based on respect for the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples in line with the purposes of the United Nations as enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. Berset (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland, like other countries, regrets that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) does not address the issue of the death penalty, which is still applied by some countries for drug-related crimes. We are strongly opposed to the use of the death penalty regardless of location or circumstances.

For drug-related crimes, there is no evidence that the death penalty has a deterrent effect that is more important or more effective than other severe penalties such as long-term sentences, and, moreover, the death penalty applied for drug-related crimes does not meet the criteria for the most serious crimes, that is, crimes committed with intent to kill, pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We share the concerns of countries facing emergency situations with respect to drug trafficking, and we are interested in having a dialogue with them on truly effective deterrents and on exemplary good practices. I would refer, for example, to the fundamental need for functional police and penitentiary institutions that are free from corruption.

Experience shows that the death penalty does not allow a country to be rid of the drug problem because that will require much more effort, more substantial efforts and other types of efforts to achieve results. Switzerland therefore invites all States Members of the United Nations that still apply the death penalty to consider a moratorium on executions, because a moratorium is a solid framework for conducting serious research into more effective means for solving the problems that exist.

Mr. De Paiva (Brazil): We warmly welcome the adoption of the outcome document of the General Assembly special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). We praise your leadership, Mr. President, as well as that of the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the work of the Board of the special session, particularly its Chair, and of all participating delegations. We see this document as an important step towards more balanced, effective and humane drug policies. It is a good basis for further progress towards 2019.

However, at this time, we would like to reaffirm Brazil's concern about the application of the death penalty to drug-related crimes. My country believes that no crime warrants the application of the death penalty, which we consider to be a human rights violation. We therefore regret that there was no agreement to address this issue in the outcome document. Brazil remains concerned about the recent increase in executions for drug-related crimes in countries that adopt the death penalty.

Respect for sovereign national decisions is a key principle for Brazil's foreign policy. That is why we would like to propose that countries, with due regard to their national realities, consider the possibility of adopting a moratorium on the application of the death penalty for drug-related crimes with a view to its final abolition. We look forward to further consideration and constructive discussions on this issue as we move towards the 2019 review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Ms. Chacón Echeverría (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation was part of the consensus that adopted resolution S-30/1 because it believes that the resolution reflects a step forward in providing new focus in and a comprehensive approach to dealing with the world drug problem. However, Costa Rica deeply regrets that the document does not include any mention of the death penalty, which is not consistent with the decision of the International Narcotics Control Board to call on countries applying the death penalty to consider its abolition in drug-related cases.

Costa Rica, the third country in the world to abolish the death penalty, opposes capital punishment on principle because it considers that it constitutes cruel and inhuman punishment that degrades the individual, violating his or her most fundamental rights such as dignity and the right to life. There is no instance or offence for which the application of the death penalty can be considered fair or justified. Moreover, our experience shows that an effective criminal justice system is possible without resorting to the death penalty.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the death penalty has a deterrent effect on crime. Any association in this regard is fallacious. With the growing support for the General Assembly resolution on the moratorium on the application of the penalty of death, and following the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's clarification that the use of the death penalty will never be consistent with the letter or spirit of the drug conventions, Costa Rica urges States that still have the death penalty in their laws to implement a moratorium on its application.

Mr. Hoie (Norway): In 2012, the General Assembly decided, by resolution 67/193, to convene a special session to review the progress in the implemtation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges.

Norway is satisfied to be a part of the consensus behind the outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). In many areas, we see positive developments, such as a stronger emphasis on health and the need to recognize different national approaches.

However, we recognize that the process failed to gather a consensus on steps that Norway views as essential for an efficient and human approach to the current and future challenges for national and global drug policy. We would have liked to see stronger language on human rights, especially with regard to the issue of the death penalty for drug-related offences and the need for more professional responses for drug offenders. The concept of harm reduction should have been recognized. We have evidence showing that those elements have an essential part in reducing the immense harm from drugs on both individuals and society.

The will of Government and the participation of civil society and a wider United Nations role is necessary to ensure an effective global drug policy that puts humans first. That requires coherence among drug control, security, human rights, public health and development policy. While the special session outcome document is a step in the right direction, those issues need to be addressed and worked on in the years ahead, while we hope for a wider recognition of their importance in 2019 and beyond. Norway intends to be a clear voice for a more progressive approach.

Mr. Romani Gerner (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*) Uruguay wishes to explain its vote and the extent to which we worked intensively with various States in the quest for this outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which is the product of a consensus in which we seek reflect all voices. Like many representatives who spoke before us, we deeply regret that the document does not include a moratorium on the death penalty, which is a measure that violates the most fundamental of human right of all — the right to life. It is not a question of the effectiveness of criminal law but of respect for the human rights instruments to which we are all committed under the Charter of the United Nations.

We also regret that in the debate that produced this document, there was insufficient discussion on the necessary decriminalization of the possession of controlled substances for personal use. It is not a mandate under the conventions, but rather a human right that must be protected. Furthermore, we regret that there has not been a serious, responsible balance of the Plan of Action that we had set ourselves earlier, which is now in progress.

Finally, we also regret the resistance to submitting and accepting the harm reduction strategy, which has shown so many benefits in containing troubling realities. It is also a means to strengthen cooperation and addressing the world drug problem.

Ms. Smith (Jamaica): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to take the floor to explain Jamaica's position on the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that has just been adopted.

Jamaica supports the consensus on the outcome document, which, we acknowledge, is the result of a long and difficult negotiation process. That included multi-State consultations and inputs submitted by Member States, civil society, international organizations and United Nations agencies. Despite the wide divergence of views, we note that important advances were made, including references to the need for comprehensive and balanced strategies, alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offenses, the importance of scientific evidence in the evaluation of drug policies and alternative development and demand reduction.

Jamaica is, however, disappointed that the document does not allow countries sufficient flexibility to design our domestic policies to fit national circumstances, including the recognition of traditional uses of cannabis in our societies and as a religious sacrament. Additionally, there is no follow-up mechanism to review the global drug control architecture and make recommendations for consideration by Member States on how best to recalibrate the global response.

Although the document does not fully live up to the aspirations of Jamaica, we remain committed to continued constructive dialogue. We encourage the international community to continue to move forward and to address the world drug problem in a manner that reflects contemporary and evolving realities.

Mr. Budiman (Indonesia): First, let me welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which represents an important milestone toward 2019.

On another note, we would like to put on record the following principle positions of our delegation concerning important issues with regard to the death

penalty. We have to reiterate that there is no international consensus on the abolition of the death penalty. The death penalty is not prohibited under international law. The application of the death penalty is a criminal justice matter for individual States, to be decided by the competent authorities. In other words, every State has the sovereign right to decide on its own justice system, taking into account its own circumstances. Every State has the sovereign right to choose its own political, economic, social and legal system, based on what is in its own best interest. Yet it is clear that the initiator of this matter in this forum has decided that only one view on the issue should be respected. We would like to clearly reiterate that the death penalty is an important component of our Administration's law and system of justice. It is imposed only for the most serious crimes and serves as a deterrence.

We are all here today because the world drug problem continues to pose a threat to the safety and security of all. Drug production and transportation are like a major sophisticated multinational cooperation run by ruthless syndicates that trade the lives of their victims for profit. We often overlook those victims. Traffickers enforce immense penalties on their victims, including the death penalty. We have proper legal safeguards in place that take into account national policies that prevent any miscarriage of justice.

The following States wish to place on record their support for this statement: Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, China, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the explanation of vote.

We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution. I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mimica (European Union): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and its member States and the following countries, which align themselves with this statement — Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Uzbekistan — in order to speak on the issue of the death penalty in relation to the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

We deeply regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty. We have a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. We consider that the death penalty undermines human dignity and that errors made in its application are irreversible. Moreover, imposing the death penalty for drug offences is against the norms of international law, specifically paragraph 2 of article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The unprecedented support generated by General Assembly resolution 69/186, on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, which was adopted in December 2014, signaled that there is an international momentum behind efforts to limit the application of the death penalty, including in terms of the number of offences for which it is imposed.

We urge all States that have not done so to implement a moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards its final abolition. Furthermore, we welcome the decision of the International Narcotics Control Board to call on countries still applying the death penalty to consider its abolition for drug-related offences and a statement from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime that the use of the death penalty has never been in the letter or the spirit of the international drug control conventions. We also encourage Member States to adopt safeguards to prevent criminal justice or other forms of international assistance resulting in a death sentence being applied and to hold international agencies to account for compliance with this and all other human rights obligations.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 8.

Agenda item 7

General debate

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jimmy Morales, President of the Republic of Guatemala.

President Morales (*spoke in Spanish*): In the so-called war on drugs, countries such as Guatemala have borne the worst part in enduring the unfair burden of the loss of human lives.

I can honestly say that Guatemala has complied with its international obligations, joining the struggle

despite our extremely limited resources and to the detriment of our investments in health, education and development. Therefore, together with Colombia and Mexico, we proposed this special session of the General Assembly as an historic opportunity not only to reflect critically on the effectiveness and challenges of the global drug policy, but also to redirect, improve and deepen international cooperation regarding this problem.

We are aware that the expected outcomes of the current global policy have not been fully achieved, that there are undesired effects and that progress has been limited. We also know that this policy should be adapted to the new realities that arise in order to address the challenges in each region and each country. In view of that, it is worth asking ourselves: If our resources are extremely limited and our social needs extremely great, what should we prioritize?

Guatemala has fostered and facilitated an open and pluralistic dialogue, taking into account the realities and interests of all countries and seeking agreements in favour of a more effective and humane drug policy. Thus we welcome the progress achieved. I wish to highlight three key points.

First, the reaffirmation that the health and welfare of humankind are the objective of the international drug control conventions can lead us to prioritize a humane approach, focused on public health and not on merely punitive responses. Second is the acknowledgement that drug policies should be consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, placing people, not substances, at the centre of those policies. Third is the recognition that the international conventions are sufficiently flexible to allow countries to implement drug policies according to their priorities and needs, meaning that each State may sovereignly decide the policy that best meets its realities, challenges and specific interests.

One of the most important changes that the current drug policy needs today is for us to give priority to the reduction in demand rather than focusing solely on a reduction in supply. We must ensure drug-policy comprehensiveness. In that regard, we welcome the balance that is beginning to emerge in some developed countries. At the same time, we believe that such an approach should be a priority for the international community towards developing countries.

I must stress that, in the search for a comprehensive and balanced policy, our country will also begin to diversify the international cooperation that we receive with regard to drug policy towards important areas such as sustainable human development, including alternative development, as well as the care, treatment and rehabilitation of problematic users and the prevention of consumption in general.

Finally, we are aware that the process is only beginning, and we have faith that the outcome document that we have adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex) is a first step that will lead us to a global policy in which human beings will be the most important element.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States.

President Peña Nieto (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations is the highest forum in which to address and overcome the global challenges of our times. That is why, in 2012, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico called for the convening of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The goal is to review the current international strategy and, above all, define the better solutions from a human rights perspective and in terms of prevention and public health, which would put the well-being of individuals at the centre.

We cannot deny that in recent years the terms of the debate have changed. A consensus is beginning to emerge in favour of meaningful reform of the international drug regime. A new approach is taking shape that resolutely fights criminals, but rather than criminalizing the consumers, it gives them opportunities and alternatives. With firmness we must continue doing what has worked. With flexibility we must change what has not produced results. The approach essentially based on prohibition — the so-called war on drugs that began in the 1970s — has not succeeded in diminishing the worldwide production, trafficking or consumption of drugs.

Drug trafficking continues to be one of the most lucrative activities of organized crime and a decisive factor in its transnational growth. Inevitably, the illegal trade in narcotics has led to death and violence, mainly in producer and transit countries. For decades, Mexico has been one of the countries that has been most committed to dealing with the problem of drugs. My country is one of the nations that has paid a high

price — too high a price — in terms of the loss of its peace, suffering and the loss of human lives — of children, young people, women and adults. Like few others, we know the limits and the painful implications of the essentially prohibitionist paradigm.

For that reason, during my Administration, we have been seeking to deal with the drug phenomenon in a more integrated way, with a strategy that seeks to avoid generating violence and in which almost all sectors of the Government of Mexico take part. To reduce the supply of drugs, we have faced up to organized crime through better coordination between our authorities, the use of intelligence systems and the dismantling of its operational and financial structures. In that way, we have managed to arrest the main criminal leaders, and we have reduced the violence in specific regions of our country, which has led to reduced crime rates. Furthermore, through the use of technology and information, we are finding, identifying and destroying drug crops and drug laboratories. At the same time, in order to reduce domestic demand, we have strengthened prevention efforts among children and youth, as well as the treatment of addictions. That approach has been backed up with social prevention of violence and crime in vulnerable communities.

Nevertheless, despite the efforts that have been made and the results that have been achieved, we are not totally free from the criminal threat while the international demand for drugs is growing. Within the current paradigm, consumer countries must do more, both in reducing their demand and in combating transnational organized crime. The scale, sophistication and corrupting power of criminal groups are also present at and within the borders of the consumer countries where the final sale takes place. To confront this situation with global responsibility, Mexico puts forth the following proposals.

First, the world drug problem requires that the international community endorse the principle of common and shared responsibility through more intense and effective international cooperation. In a globalized world, drugs are also a global issue that concerns all nations. No country can address this scourge by itself. Moreover, the divergence among the public policies of each country makes it difficult to have cooperation and achieve results. Therefore, we need global consensus, or at least consensus at the hemispheric level, to address the problem of drugs effectively.

Second, we must strengthen the common front against transnational organized crime so that it does not have room to carry out its financial operations and related crimes. We must strengthen cooperation among our Governments and expand the exchange of information and joint actions to dismantle criminal organizations.

My third point is that better coordination and collaboration among the United Nations specialized agencies is necessary in order to address all aspects of the global drug problem. Through their different mandates and with a greater cooperation among them, entities such as the United Nations Office or Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women and the World Health Organization should support Member States in implementing the best strategies, policies and programmes to deal with drugs.

Fourth, the public policies and actions based on the international drug policy should be aligned with the sustainable development efforts under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The Sustainable Development Goals and efforts aimed at resolving the global problem of drugs must be complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The fifth point is that we should deal with the social damage associated with the illicit drug market. For those communities affected by organized crime, we need an integrated effort for the prevention of violence, exclusion and the weakening of the social fabric. We must support the affected communities with educational, employment and recreational alternatives that strengthen social inclusion and cohesion. In particular, we must create productive alternatives in those areas where narcotics are grown, for example, crop substitution and international agriculture contract programmes.

Sixth, given the limitations of the prohibitionist paradigm, we must address the global issue of drugs from the perspective of human rights. Only in that way can we offer more comprehensive and balanced responses that promote development. This fundamental change involves modifying the eminently punitive approach so as to put individuals, their rights and their dignity — not the substances or legal processes — at the centre of our efforts.

Seventh, drug use should be addressed essentially as a public health problem, since it constitutes a threat to

the full development of people, especially our children and young people. Drug addiction must be addressed through comprehensive prevention mechanisms and therapeutic solutions, not penal instruments that criminalize consumers and damage the development of their personality.

Eighth, in drug-related offenses, we must have sentences that are in proportion to the crime and alternatives to imprisonment that also incorporate a gender perspective. Disproportionate sanctions that punish women and children in vulnerable situations, far from solving the problem, generate vicious cycles of exclusion and criminality. Furthermore, treatment, education, rehabilitation and social reintegration services should be provided to the prison population.

Ninth, we need international efforts to prevent drug use through a campaign directed at children and young people at a global level. We must protect the most vulnerable members of our societies, ensuring that they know the negative effects associated with drug consumption and the use of psychotropic substances.

The tenth point is that we should ensure the availability of and better access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, at the same time avoiding their diversion, misuse, and trafficking. That proposal stems from the broad national debate on the use of marijuana, which the Government of Mexico convened, with experts, academics and representatives of civil society.

As President of Mexico, at this special session I want to give a voice to those who expressed the need to update the regulatory framework to authorize the use of marijuana for medical and scientific purposes. Participants in those forums also expressed the importance of increasing, in accordance with international standards, the amount of marijuana that can be considered for personal use in order to not criminalize consumers. In the coming days, the Government of Mexico will outline the specific actions to be taken to that end, in accordance with the principles of public health and human rights that we have proposed in this special session. Therefore, from this rostrum, from the highest forum of the international community, I acknowledge the experts, academics and representatives of civil society who have contributed ideas and guidance towards a new consensus.

The world drug problem is a phenomenon that knows no borders and harms societies throughout the world. So far, the responses that have been implemented by the international community have, frankly, been inadequate. I trust that this special session will provide a new international understanding on this matter. It is my hope that this dialogue will enable us to begin generating the vision, tools and new consensus that we need to counter the drug phenomenon in the twenty-first century. Together, we can find solutions. We must move beyond prohibition to effective prevention and regulation. Thousands of lives depend on it.

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by Her Excellency Ms. Ana Helena Chacón, Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Ms. Chacón (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to convey the solidarity of the people of Costa Rica with the brotherly countries of Ecuador and Japan in the tragedies that they are facing. We also wish to express our deepest condolences to Afghanistan on the new terrorist attack that has just taken place there.

Costa Rica aligns itself with the statement to be made by the Minister of State of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, as well as the Board tasked with organizing this special session.

Similarly, my country wishes to thank Mexico for its leadership, as, along with Colombia and Guatemala, it pushed for the convening of this event. Costa Rica supported this initiative from the outset, because it believes that in the light of the new shared challenges and the meagre results of the current strategy, an open and inclusive debate is needed, one based on the best interdisciplinary evidence available that would enable us to focus our efforts on designing and implementing plans, policies and actions to address the world drug problem with a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach centred centred on the human being. Without doubt, the convening of this session represents a genuine turning point towards a more socially oriented policy with a human face in addressing the drug phenomenon. We reiterate that there is plenty of evidence to show that the past 50 years of repressive policies and the war on drugs have still not provided the solution.

Although Costa Rica is pleased to see the consensus achieved in the recommendations negotiated in Vienna, and although we are pleased that the document embodies

the commitment of States to tackle a phenomenon that is far from being under control, we must bear in mind that for the sake of consensus, elements crucial to a truly comprehensive approach were left out of the document. In that connection, Costa Rica wishes to emphasize that if we really wish to reduce the adverse effects of this scourge, it is essential to deal with issues that were not mentioned in the document, such as new approaches, harm reduction, proportionality in sentencing, the non-use of the death penalty, the effectiveness of policies and the formation of a panel of experts to study and guide our strategies. Similarly, the document should not be considered an end in itself, but rather as a point of departure for developing and fostering more comprehensive and effective policies.

Costa Rica has never punished consumption as a crime. Our approach has always been from the perspective of prevention and health. We use 60 per cent of the funds seized from drug trafficking to finance projects in the fields of prevention and treatment. More recently, we have reformed our criminal laws to include a focus on gender and proportionality, which allows us to reduce prison sentences for vulnerable women.

However, no country can effectively deal with drug trafficking alone, given its transnational nature. From the perspective of cooperation, the inclusion of reciprocal legal assistance is essential for our region, which also requires cooperation to implement the social and public-health measures needed to deal with this problem comprehensively. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the interregional work being carried out under the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Cooperation Programme on Drugs Policies, between Latin America and the European Union, which provide an opportunity to place human beings at the centre of our drug policies.

Although the outcome document that we have adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex) comes as a welcome step and reflects some of the new pathways that we should take in the international debate on the world drug problem, we still have more work to do. That must be reflected in actions that enable us to place our countries on the path of egalitarian, inclusive and sustainable development, in accordance with the commitments adopted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Costa Rica will therefore promote such cooperation and is already committed to working actively and constructively in this special session, as well as in the follow-up. I hope we can meet again on this subject after having achieved more results than what we have achieved together so far as a region and as a hemisphere.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama.

Mrs. De Saint Malo de Alvarado (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Given its geographical position, Panama has historically been a unique crossroads and a point of convergence on the planet. The connectivity that our country provides benefits countries in our hemisphere and serves as a bridge to other countries. Nevertheless, and sadly, those same advantages have made Panama an attractive route for those who plan, develop and commit unlawful acts, especially those related to drug trafficking. That has meant that our country has had to expend extraordinary efforts to combat the ever-growing shipments of illicit substances and the money derived from that trade and related activities.

The Republic of Panama, aware of its responsibilities to the international community, has implemented a series of strategies to combat the scourges of drug trafficking and organized crime. Our commitment to mitigating those scourges, which limit the development of our peoples, is very strong. Another threat that we face comes from the groups that work outside the law, a phenomenon that has emerged as a result of domestic conflicts in neighbouring countries. The steps that we are taking as a region to put a definitive end to those conflicts have, unfortunately, also led to the appearance of criminal gangs.

Despite the vigorous efforts that Panama is expending to combat drug trafficking and organized crime, it is suffering the consequences of the substantial increase in drug production in countries in the region and the transfer of drugs from where they are produced to where they are sold and consumed throughout our territories. As a result of our efforts in that area, we can point out that, over the past 10 years, we have been able to confiscate more than 400 tons of illicit substances, including 57 tons seized in 2015. That is a world record in terms of confiscation and has made the Republic of Panama the country with the third largest volume of seizures in the world.

This fight against the transfer of drugs from producing countries to countries that are large consumers, and against the border groups and their consequent configuration as criminal gangs, has meant that the Panamanian nation has to allocate a considerable part of its national budget to dealing with rhose crimes, rather than being able to use them for its other needs in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). In doing so, the Government of Panama has demonstrated its commitment to transparency and its commitment to combating illegal and criminal activities, even when they do not originate in its territory.

That is why we would like to reiterate that, motivated by the multilateral instruments that deal with combating those scourges, we have been modifying our legislation in accordance with the standards promoted by international agencies, such as the Financial Action Task Force, which has led Panama to develop modern and effective standards that allow us to prevent and combat money-laundering in our international financial centre. Panama, with a strong economy based on services, is implementing various measures to avoid and prevent our financial system from being used for illegal purposes. As we do this, we have been implementing due diligence and have enforced the know-your-client principle so as to prevent money-laundering, the funding of terrorism and many other criminal activities, in accordance with the legislation and international agreements ratified by the Panamanian State.

From this rostrum, I wish to assure the world of Panama'a commitment to the highest international standards of transparency. We will do everything we can to ensure that the world is aware of our efforts, which are currently being unfairly deprecated through the release of documents that wrongly carry the name of my country.

Among the other efforts we are making, I would like to share with delegations the fact that we have organized a regional inter-agency security centre, whose main purpose will be to serve as a centre for merging international intelligence, which will facilitate the exchange of information and the production of strategic knowledge on security issues.

With regard to health policies, the Panamanian State has maintained an upright position with regard to the importance of the use of controlled substances for medical purposes. Dealing with the issue of drugs is a fundamental part of public management, and we are tackling it through a focus on people rather than on substances, with a broad scope from the promotion of health to social reintegration.

The individual efforts of our countries will be ineffective unless we deal with the scourge of drugs in a coordinated manner at the global level. Panama reiterates its commitment to that end, toward a response based on solidarity and cooperation.

I would like to close by saying that Panama is a country that serves the world, a noble country with strong convictions, and our actions are a testament to that. We are a safe and trustworthy country. We are much more than just a source of documents. We are a country committed to fairness and transparency with a strong calling to serve. We are a country that, as the motto of our official seal says, is always at the service of humankind.

The President: Before we proceed, I want to inform the General Assembly that I was just informed by the Afghan Ambassador that an explosion in Kabul involving a truck filled with explosives has killed as many as 28 people and wounded 327. On behalf of the General Assembly I want to convey our condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan and to those who lost their loved ones in this terrible terror attack in Afghanistan.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Guo Shengkun, State Counselor and Minister for Public Security of China.

Mr. Guo Shengkun (China) (*spoke in Chinese)*: We gather here to discuss strategies and actions to counter the drug problem. This meeting demonstrates the international community's determination to rectify the problem and deepen cooperation. China applauds the extraordinary work done by the Board for the special session and will work with other countries for the successful conclusion of the session and will fully implement the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

For many years, the international community has been making unremitting efforts to control drugs, with encouraging results. A full-fledged international drug control system has been established, a global framework with the three international conventions as the centerpiece has taken shape, and a Political Declaration and Plan of Action have been formulated. On the other

hand, global drug control still faces formidable and complex challenges; the fight remains an uphill battle. China will remain committed to the principle of broad participation and shared responsibility and will fully implement the comprehensive, integrated and balanced international counter-narcotics strategy.

In view of recent developments, China would like to call for greater international efforts in the following five areas.

The first is to forge partnerships based on equality and mutual benefit. It is important that countries honour the principle of sovereign equality, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and avoid injecting political factors into anti-narcotics efforts or using drug control as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The international community should embrace a mindset of win-win cooperation, forge global partnerships and build a community based on a shared destiny for humankind in combating the drug problem.

Secondly, the drug control system must be improved through shared responsibility and common efforts. While international drug control agencies need to play a leading role, the producer, transit and consumer countries, as well as those affected by the drug menace, should share the responsibility for narcotics control. It is important to mobilize and involve international and non-governmental organizations and civil society in countering the drug problem so as to create a situation where drug control agencies play a leading role, national Governments share responsibilities and society as a whole becomes actively involved.

Thirdly, an integrated and balanced drug control strategy must be pursued in the light of national conditions. The fundamental role of the three conventions in the international drug control system needs to be solidified and brought into full play. Any form of legalization of narcotics should be resolutely opposed. We need to respect and support countries in introducing laws, policies and strategic measures in the light of their respective conditions. We must continue to implement a drug control strategy that is integrated, balanced and based on scientific evidence and must uphold the authority, consistency and inclusiveness of our drug policies.

Fourthly, we must form mechanisms for standardized, practical and efficient operations. Countries should carry out joint actions in combating drug-related crimes, step up international and regional law enforcement cooperation and establish standardized, practical and efficient mechanisms for intelligence-sharing, case-based cooperation, anti-money laundering and mutual legal assistance. International control measures and verification systems should be strictly enforced and strengthened to tighten the control of precursors at the source and prevent the spread of new psychoactive substances.

Fifthly, we must pursue shared development and progress through joint efforts. Countries must uphold the spirit of cooperation and trust and advance anti-narcotic endeavours through mutual assistance. Developed countries should provide funding and technical assistance to developing countries and vigorously pursue alternative development strategies to improve the lives of people in areas where narcotics plants are cultivated. All countries should be guided by the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, live up to their commitments and duly contribute to the global fight against drugs.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the fight against narcotics. For years we have carried out people's campaigns against drugs, and we have achieved notable progress. In the past decade we cracked down on more than 1 million drug crime cases and seized 751 tons of drugs. There has been a total of 950,000 cases of community-level treatment and rehabilitation and 1.21 million cases of compulsory isolation for rehabilitation, and more than 1.2 million ex-users have avoided relapse within a three-year period. The Chinese Government has spent ¥1.6 billion on alternative cultivation in Myanmar and the northern part of Laos, which now covers an area of 3.5 million Chinese mu, equaling more than 233,000 hectares.

The Chinese Government is firmly committed to fighting drugs. China will act on President Xi Jingping's instructions, actively implement anti-drug policies and strive to win the people's campaigns. China will continue to support the work of the United Nations counter-narcotic agencies, take an active part in international and regional cooperation and jointly combat relevant transnational crimes. We will continue to promote sustainable alternative development and provide as much assistance as we can to help relevant countries. We stand ready to work with the international community to build partnerships for mutual benefit, to

advance the cause of drug control and to work tirelessly for the health, safety and well-being of mankind.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Hasanov, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Hasanov (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): Since it became independent, Azerbaijan has signed all United Nations conventions, and we have established a modern legal framework in our country. Azerbaijan cooperates closely with the United Nations and its structures; the Council of Europe; the Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova Group; and the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre.

I wish to point out that the current methods in the fight against drug addiction and narcotics need to be reviewed. Given that organized criminal groups are finding new ways to secure their profits, markets and consumers, drug prevention efforts should also be modernized. The outcome document adopted at this special session of the General Assembly (resolution S-30/1, annex) should play a substantive role in moving forward our joint efforts to combat this evil.

In recent years we have been implementing large-scale international construction projects in our country. We have seen growth in international transit and have attracted foreign citizens to our country. That in turn has generated interest among international drug gangs to bring in drugs and to use Azerbaijan as a transit country. Analysis shows that more than 95 per cent of the drugs found by our law enforcement agencies arrive in our country from the south. The most recent such cases were in March and April of this year, when we found and confiscated about one ton of heroin from trucks transiting through Azerbaijan.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As is known, for 24 years about 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory has been occupied by the armed forces of Armenia. As a result, our country, which has a population of 10 million, has about 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons. Furthermore, as a result of that aggression 132 kilometres of our southern State borders are controlled by Armenia. Drugs are being grown in the territories occupied by the Armenian forces, and there are special laboratories to process these drugs. They are then sent off to various countries. The law enforcement agencies of our country have a significant database that has been submitted to the relevant United Nations bodies.

Essentially, combating the drug problem is based on respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In that connection, the Republic of Azerbaijan calls upon the international community to put pressure on Armenia in order to ensure that it fulfils the four relevant Security Council resolutions that have been adopted since 1993, demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territory in Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan will continue to closely cooperate with neighbouring and other States in the exchange of experience and information in the fight against drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fidias Aristy, Minister of State and President of the National Council on Drugs of the Dominican Republic, who will speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Aristy (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the high honour to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Recently, during the third Ministerial Meeting of CELAC on the world drug problem, held in Santo Domingo, we stated that addressing the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility that requires effective international cooperation, as well as comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced policies and strategies to reduce both supply and demand. Those should be in line with national legislation and the three United Nations conventions on drugs, as well as other relevant international instruments, in full respect of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with particular regard to respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We emphasize that all drug policies must incorporate in an integral manner the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in accordance with the spirit and purpose of safeguarding the health and welfare of humankind. We express concern about the impact of the world drug problem on the health of people and on democratic institutions, and its serious economic effect and the social damages it causes. For that reason, we deem it necessary to continue to strengthen international cooperation and the exchange of good

practices, promoting and boosting comprehensive and balanced policies on this issue.

We reaffirm before the Assembly that it is necessary to adopt effective and practical drug prevention measures, in particular measures to prevent illegal drug use among children and adolescents. That includes developing appropriate prevention programmes based on scientific evidence, fundamentally in the education system at all levels, as well as promoting opportunities to enable a healthy life within the family and social circles.

CELAC emphasizes that it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation as the central axis of efforts to address the world drug problem, including the provision of greater financial and logistical resources to the countries that require them, especially transit countries, in order to increase their capacity to counter drug trafficking. We recognize the need to improve the capacity of States to incorporate into their strategies the prevention, detection and sanctioning of organized crime devoted to activities of illegal drug trafficking and related crimes.

CELAC reaffirms that public policies aimed at addressing the word drug problem should be designed and implemented with a gender focus. Those policies should also recognize the situation of exclusion experienced by the most vulnerable groups in our societies, in particular people of African descent, indigenous peoples and other minorities, and the sexually diverse population. We express the need to address the situation of drug users comprehensively, through measures that take into account their full development, in accordance with national legislation, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments.

CELAC reiterates the importance of strengthening alternative, comprehensive and sustainable development programmes, including prevention programmes, in the framework of national policies and based on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development. Along with other solutions, they represent an effective strategy and basic tool offering a significant and feasible way of reducing illicit drug crop cultivation and guiding sustainable urban development policies in line with specific national requirements for those affected by illegal drug-related activities.

We reaffirm our commitment to promoting bilateral, triangular and regional cooperation among CELAC States. We reiterate our decision to reinforce criminal prosecution of those involved in drug-trafficking activities and transnational organized crime, sharing experiences and best practices on new trends and modalities in drug trafficking and money-laundering and comprehensively addressing the challenges posed by new substances, methamphetamines and other synthetic drugs that are not yet under international control and scrutiny.

CELAC emphasizes that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) calls for aligning international efforts and policies, including those related to drugs, with a view to promoting development, inclusion, a mainstreamed approach to gender, and people's well-being in every area. We reiterate our rejection of unilateral lists and certifications issued by developed countries that affect Latin American and Caribbean countries, particularly those relating to drug trafficking and similar measures.

We recognize the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, with its subsidiary bodies, as the main United Nations regulatory body with regard to drug-related matters, together with the International Narcotics Control Board. We also acknowledge the role of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, among other entities, within their respective mandates and in the context of the process of the General Assembly's special session.

The members of CELAC reaffirm their commitment to continuing these discussions and following up in order to expand and continue the dialogue and regional consensus with a view to 2019, in accordance with the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Mimica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Albania;

the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States welcome the opportunity that this much-needed debate affords to address the world drug problem. We welcome the rebalancing of global drug policies in the direction of a sound, multidisciplinary public health and human rights approach. Effective drug policies must be based on evidence and reliable monitoring systems. The role of civil society and the scientific community must be recognized. It is important that the different needs of men, women, children and young and vulnerable people are adequately treated. The European Union has a long-standing commitment on all these issues.

We reiterate our strong commitment to the United Nations drug control conventions, which form the cornerstones of the global response to the world drug problem. They provide sufficient scope and flexibility to accommodate a wide range of approaches in accordance with national and regional specificities. The European Union strongly supports the anchoring of drug policy in a wider socioeconomic context, in line with the Sustainable Development Agenda (see resolution 70/1), so as to promote health, democracy, the rule of law and sustainable livelihoods. In order to tackle the root causes of the illicit cultivation of drug crops, alternative development should be actively promoted to provide alternative and sustainable livelihoods and to reduce the dependence of affected communities on illicit drug economies.

The European Union fully supports the call for enhanced coordination between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime — the agency with principal responsibility in this area — and other United Nations entities and specialized agencies, notably the World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Human Rights Council. We welcome strengthened international cooperation aimed at countering drug trafficking and its links with corruption, organized crime and, in some cases, terrorism. We are firmly committed to addressing the growing threats posed by new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet for drug trafficking. The European Union will also continue to participate fully in preventing the diversion of precursors.

Human rights are an integral part of any response to the drug problem. Consequently, we fully support proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences and the promotion of alternatives to incarceration and coercive sanctions. We deeply regret, however, that the outcome document we have just adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex) does not address the abolition of the death penalty for drug offences. The European Union is strongly and unequivocally opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances, since it undermines human dignity and fails to act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

The ultimate objective of the international drug control system is the protection of public health. Policies to reduce the demand for drugs must include the full range of measures, from prevention and treatment to social reintegration and recovery. Measures to reduce risks and harm should be further promoted and implemented, since they have proven to be effective in many countries all over the world in preventing overdose deaths and the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases,

All of those elements are of defining importance ahead of the high-level meeting to be held in 2019 to review the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We need a firm commitment from all parties if we are to effectively implement the renewed approach of the United Nations to the world drug problem and put into practice our operational recommendations. That is what our citizens expect from all of us.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Bent Høie, Minister of Health and Care Services of Norway, who will speak on behalf of the Pompidou Group.

Mr. Høie (Norway): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 37 States members of the Pompidou Group. The Pompidou Group is the entity within the Council of Europe that works to uphold its core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Pompidou Group deems it extremely important and relevant to remind the Assembly that a drug policy — like all other policy fields — must be developed, implemented and evaluated in a manner that takes into account and fully respects fundamental

human rights. The Pompidou Group notes that human rights have been highlighted in the outcome document of this special session on the world drug problem, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). The Group expects that the follow-up process will take human rights concerns fully into account and contribute to the task of defining the impact of human rights on drug policies where that is unclear. The Pompidou Group welcomes the fact that the outcome document is based on the concept of a balanced approach to drug policies.

In the follow-up process, at both the international and the national levels, the relevant authorities need to perform objective and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the efforts to reduce drug problems in order to assess whether there are imbalances to be rectified. The Pompidou Group expects that the follow-up process will include scientific work and evidence-based practical tools aimed at enabling Member States to evaluate the cost-benefit ratio of the various measures they implement at the national level.

The Pompidou Group takes this opportunity to highlight a few areas where human rights need to shape and impact the drug policies of the international community. It is evident that drug users should enjoy the same rights under the existing international human rights instruments as all other persons.

First and foremost, the application of the death penalty for drug-related offences does not accord with human rights obligations. Secondly, the application of inhumane punishment and torture for drug-related offences does not accord with human rights obligations. Thirdly, drug-users have an uncontested right to equitable access to health-care services for their drug addiction and other drug- or non-drug-related health problems.

The Pompidou Group expects the follow-up process to the special session to take those concerns fully into account. The Group expects relevant actors to work dedicatedly towards abolishing the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences and the use of inhumane punishment and torture and towards ensuring access to treatment and rehabilitation, as well as measures to reduce risks and harmful measures for the benefit of all, including those incarcerated, in order to minimize the health and social consequences of drug use.

The Pompidou Group welcomes the follow-up process to this special session. The Group underscores its expectation that there will be an open debate where human rights would be recognized as a fundamental element for a coherent and balanced drug policy. Such a policy should promote awareness of both the positive and the unintended effects of the various measures that are implemented to address the world drug problem.

I should now like to make the following statement in my national capacity.

The preparations for this event have been long and intense. My thanks go to all those involved. The draft of the special session's outcome document agreed to in Vienna last month was an important step. Norway had, however, hoped for a more forward-looking outcome.

The special session process has attracted enormous attention and interest. It provides an excellent basis for our preparations for the next special session, in 2019. We are pleased that the international debate has increasingly placed a focus on health and well-being. Human rights must inspire all our work. We are pleased to note that human rights have been reflected in the outcome document, although Norway would have liked to see stronger language. We regret that it was not possible to agree on language on the death penalty. Norway is strongly opposed to the death penalty and will continue to work for its abolition.

Moreover, we have seen positive developments regarding access to controlled medicines. The problem relating to lack of availability, acceptability and affordability needs to be acknowledged as a first step. We need to fully ensure the availability of such controlled medicines for those in need. The outcome document welcomes, as do we, the Sustainable Development Goals as complementary measures that reinforce drug control, and recommends the use of relevant human-development indicators.

While there have been positive developments, some issues are still not being dealt with adequately.

First, we had expected that the reduction of risks would be recognized, accepted and included in the document. However, we do recognize that the outcome document includes references to programmes compatible with that approach: nalaxone and overdose prevention, medication-assisted therapy programmes and injecting-equipment programmes.

Eighteen years have passed since the previous General Assembly special session on drugs in 1998. We still face huge challenges on almost all measurable indicators. Have we sufficiently understood why our approach has failed to meet our stated goals and what it is that we need in order to readdress the drug challenge?

The world drug problem is a multifaceted phenomenon. A successful approach requires coordinated contributions from several sectors at the local, national and international levels. We must think health in all policies. Real development and the participation of the wider United Nations are necessary in order to ensure an effective global drug policy that puts humans first. That requires coherence among drug control and security, human rights and public health, as well as a development policy. The Secretary-General should lead the necessary work, which should be implemented at the most senior level in the Secretariat. Continued and strengthened civil society involvement will also be a key factor.

As we head towards the 2019 special session, we need to be more ambitious. Some elements of our approach have worked well but need to be strengthened. Other aspects must be questioned. New elements must be submitted to an open-minded debate. Our ultimate goal — to promote health in every policy — must inform our debate to a larger extent than it has so far.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Onyeama (Nigeria): At the outset, I would like to state for the record, in the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and consensus-building, that Nigeria aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Sudan on behalf of the African Group.

The nature and character of the contemporary world drug problem are becoming increasingly complex and severe. It is therefore pertinent to discuss the factors that have impacted both the illicit drug supply and demand reduction. The latter, we believe, remains the most effective way of tackling the world drug problem. That is why we consider the holding of this special session a significant milestone. Nigeria therefore stands ready to join forces with all stakeholders in order to achieve those objectives.

Nigeria recognizes that the challenges will require an integrated, multidimensional, balanced and comprehensive approach by the international community, because no single methodology can provide solutions for addressing the different aspects of the world drug problem.

The consequences of drug abuse continue to ravage families, communities and the society at large in our region. The abuse of drugs also continues to undermine efforts aimed at promoting and achieving sustainable development. That is accentuated by the increasing use of Africa as a transit channel for illicit drugs and psychotropic substances, which is worrisome. Those activities have created security challenges, especially that of posed by transnational organized crime in transit countries. Nigeria therefore welcomes the adoption of the revised African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017). We look forward to complementary efforts by the international community for the actualization of its laudable objectives.

Nigeria notes that at the subregional level, the member States of the Economic Community of West African States are collaborating actively in the fight against the menace of illicit drugs. In that regard, Nigeria welcomes the comprehensive assessment of the situation in West Africa, which identified the gaps and the needs to effectively combat illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse.

Nigeria reiterates its full commitment to supporting subregional, regional and international mechanisms established to fight the world drug problem. My delegation calls for enhanced cooperation and collaboration among regional police chiefs, drug-law enforcement agencies and border security, as well as regional and international organizations, in the fight against illicit drug use. Our experience shows that such international cooperation has resulted in better exchange of information and intelligence-sharing and has had a positive impact on addressing the drug problem.

Nigeria has taken necessary steps with the launch of the National Drug Control Master Plan. The Plan provides an integrated and comprehensive solution to a range of drug-related issues, in line with international drug control conventions. It consists of four pillars: law enforcement, drug-demand reduction, access to and control of narcotics and psychotropic substances, and monitoring and evaluation as the coordination mechanism for effective implementation of the Master Plan.

As a test case for the Master Plan, Nigeria has embraced the sustainable alternative development programme as one of the key strategies for addressing cannabis cultivation, which is the single largest local home-grown concern for us. In that connection, Nigeria is resolved to continue to support the effective implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development.

In line with the second pillar of the Master Plan — drug-demand reduction — Nigeria is implementing a pilot treatment project that uses the modified West African Epidemiological Network on Drug Use for the Nigerian network. Eleven tertiary hospital treatment centres have been linked to that project. The final analysis of the data reveals important policy-making information, which serves as a model for other countries in West Africa. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the support of the European Union and for the technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the accelerated implementation of Nigeria's Drug Control Master Plan.

Nigeria is of the conviction that the outcome document of this special session, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex), can now be used to forge global action needed to assist millions of women, children and men around the world. My delegation wishes to reiterate Nigeria's firm commitment to the fight against illicit drugs. While much has been achieved by the Government of Nigeria, challenges still remain. We are, however, confident that with the support of the United Nations, Member States and development partners, those challenges can be adequately addressed. Our goal is to support the building of an inclusive and safer society that is free of drug abuse for present and future generations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Igor Lukšić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro

Mr. Lukšić (Montenegro): Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. Allow me, however, to stress certain points of particular relevance for my country.

In addition to having major security implications, the enormous profits generated through drug trafficking and its linkage with other forms of organized crime — corruption, money laundering and terrorism — constitute a threat to State authority, impede the economic development of societies and undermine the rule of law. Overdose, addiction and the spread of HIV and hepatitis also demonstrate why the drug problem presents a risk to the health and well-being of people worldwide. It is therefore evident that a more effective response to this phenomenon calls for a holistic and integrated approach that encompasses the entire nexus of human rights, safety, security and sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) — more specifically its Goals 3 and 16 — provides an opportunity to reinvigorate our efforts in orderto come closer to a healthier, safer and more prosperous future for all.

In our common quest to reduce the demand for and supply of drugs, criminalization and punishment measures are simply not enough, although one has to recognize their importance in protecting health and safety. We have to strive for more balanced policies, rooted in health, and also human rights, that prioritize access to prevention, treatment and care services. My country is fully cognizant of that and as a result is heavily invested in that approach. As part of our long-term orientation, we have worked diligently to develop prevention and treatment programmes with a view to preventing people, especially youth, from starting to use drugs and to developing capacities and increasing coverage to treat addiction, as well as facilitating social reintegration. In that regard, let me stress that mainstreaming gender and age perspectives in drug-related policies and programmes is essential for the overall results of our work.

Successfully addressing and countering the world drug problem is a shared responsibility and as such requires close cooperation and coordination at all levels, with the involvement and participation of civil society and academia in all aspects of drug policy. The work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, other organizations and United Nations entities in supporting Member States, especially those most in need, to tackle illicit drugs and organized crime is indispensable. The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) is a good basis for more concerted efforts in the future.

It is clear that only by joint, coherent actions and close collaboration among all stakeholders can we make the difference in eradicating this scourge. We need to extend partnerships, engage young people in particular

and work out better coordination to be more efficient and effective in delivering on our agenda

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Salamat Azimi, Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Ms. Azimi (Afghanistan) (*spoke in Dari; English text provided by the delegation*): It is my great pleasure and honour to address this historic special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

Afghanistan has been the prime victim of the challenges arising from the ever-expanding production and trafficking of narcotics. We are strongly committed to joining the international community in combating this global menace, which has undermined our efforts to achieve a better future. Afghanistan has done its part at the national, regional and international levels in the fight against narcotics and illegal drugs, which have become the main source of income for terrorist activities in the country.

Unfortunately today, once again, the Taliban carried out a terrorist attack in Kabul, committing a serious crime against innocent Afghan people whereby at least 28 people were killed and more than 329 injured. We strongly condemn that terrorist attack and express our gratitude to all who have extended condolences and support to Afghanistan in such a difficult moment. By committing that terrorist attack, the Taliban once again demonstrated their absolute disregard for the Afghan people and rejected the ongoing peace process. The Government of Afghanistan is committed to fighting the Taliban, Da'esh and all other terrorist groups that remain a serious threat to the security and stability of our nation.

It is obvious that the fight against drugs and narcotics is beyond the limit of any single Government. Therefore, extensive help is needed from the international community. In Afghanistan we have just adopted the national action plan, which I presented yesterday to the international community at the side event, here in New York. That strategic plan translates the commitment of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to pursuing a balanced and sustainable strategy through an integrated plan involving alternative development, poppy eradication, public information, arrests of drug traffickers and smugglers and treatment of addicts. The implementation of the plan will require the sustained and effective support of our donors in the international community. Without such support, narcotics can create massive problems not only for Afghanistan but also for all countries worldwide. We believe that one big cause of insecurity in Afghanistan is narcotic drugs and the existing precursors within the country.

Due to the importance Afghanistan attaches to this special session, His Excellency Abdul Rashid Dostum, First Vice President of Afghanistan, was scheduled to address the General Assembly at this special session. However, he was unable to attend due to unforeseen internal engagements. I would like to deliver a portion of his personal message to the Assembly.

> "Mr. President, today's historic special session of the General Assembly to address the challenges of the world drug problem is very important and a welcome event in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan is committed to doing its part by joining in the efforts of the international community in the fight against this global challenge.
>
> "I wish each Member every success in carrying out the important task of achieving a desirable outcome, which is to address the challenges of the world drug problem. That is urgent and important for our security, stability and economic development. Let me express my deep gratitude and appreciation to our partners in the international community for the continued support provided to Afghanistan, as well as to our partners who, sadly, have sacrificed their lives in order to provide a better future for the war-stricken people of Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan will truly never forget those sacrifices."

Due to time constraints, I will not read out the First Vice-President's full statement. It has been distributed in this Hall as Afghanistan's official statement and I request that the Secretariat isue the full statement as an official document of the special session.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luis Rojas, Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Rojas (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Paraguay joins others in extending solidarity with and expressing condolences to the brotherly countries of Ecuador, Japan and Afghanistan.

Paraguay aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Minister of State of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The world drug problem, due to its multidimensional and changing nature, is one of the most complex challenges facing us at present. It makes no distinction among borders or countries, yet its terrible consequences strike developing countries with greater force. We recognize that the world drug problem is a serious threat to democracy, the rule of law, health and justice and that it affects the dignity, security and well-being of the individual, especially children, young people and women, and ultimately of families and communities.

The Government of my country has initiated a process of frank and open dialogue to address the real situation in the country. The process is raw, long and painful yet necessary, indispensable in creating honest change in public policies. In that context, we are developing a new approach in dealing with the problem of drugs through a policy that is our own, not an imported one. It includes a new way of understanding and confronting this global scourge without lies that obscure realities, however crude they may be and motivated by political convenience. Lying and improvising on the issue of drugs carry dire consequences. We have learned that painful lesson well in my country. Today, thanks to that new focus, a public debate has been launched at all levels of society, from common citizens to university forums, a debate on the reality of public corruption, on the phenomenon of narco-politics, violence and money-laundering. That has opened a new direction, acting as social pressure in Paraguay and is taking the form of a brave public-private alliance against the crime of drug trafficking.

We recognize that there are currently different realities and positions on how to confront the problem, and we are respectful of the various measures promoted by States within the framework of their respective sovereignty. But we are convinced that the diversity of responses to the global drug problem must not get in the way of finding shared mechanisms for solutions at the regional and international levels. On the contrary, such a diversity of measures must enrich our global joint action.

In that regard, Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to the three international conventions on drugs, which it considers to be the cornerstone of the international drug control system. We are convinced that human beings must be the focus of the fight against the problem and that the ultimate purpose of the conventions is to preserve the health and welfare of people. Paraguay accordingly reiterates that the world drug problem must be addressed under the principle of common and shared responsibility, in accordance with national laws and applicable international law, in particular international human rights law, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

In Paraguay, international, regional and subregional cooperation is a central component of support for efforts to respond to the drug problem effectively, adequately and in a balanced manner. We therefore believe that it is essential to continue promoting such cooperation. We believe that progress in meeting international commitments and actions undertaken by States must be based on a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to all the components of the world drug problem, thereby ensuring a reduction in both supply and demand. Let us not focus on strategies that have proved to be ineffectual.

In that regard, the focus should be on the structural and socioeconomic factors underpinning the problem of drugs within our societies, and we must implement comprehensive, inclusive and appropriate responses and encouraging alternative and sustainable development. Furthermore, we must strengthen public health systems and implement a solid approach to health in the fight against drugs, in order to ensure respect for the human rights of consumers, while at the same time ensuring the provision of care with dignity and without discrimination. Similarly, States must strengthen their strategies to prevent, detect and punish the corruption linked to drug-trafficking activities and related crimes, and improve the tools used to investigate money-laundering. On the other hand, we believe that scientific research on cannabis must be encouraged in the medical and industrial areas, and we are open to accepting the results and working in accordance with that research in a responsible manner.

Paraguay calls upon States to analyse the possibility of implementing alternatives to incarceration for those who have committed minor offenses related to drug use and possession, where appropriate and consistent with their national legislation. In Paraguay, the consumer is not a criminal for simply having used drugs; users are citizens who need specialized health care. We reiterate our firm support for the effort to suppress the use of the death penalty in all of its forms, and especially for drug-related crimes.

Finally, Paraguay reiterates its firm commitment to the fight against the global scourge of drugs, under existing international conventions, based on the principle of the common and shared responsibility of all States, while respecting the sovereignty and the particular characteristics of each country.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control of Pakistan.

Mr. Ali Khan (Pakistan): It is indeed a pleasure for me to address this high-level gathering in its discussion on the world drug problem. We share, appreciate and support the global concern about the devastating effects of illicit drugs.

Pakistan's geographical location has confronted it with multifaceted challenges and has exposed it as the prime victim and transit country for the majority of global opiates and cannabis. We believe that the drug dynamics in the production, transit and target countries are diverse. No two countries and no two regions have a similar environment. There are therefore no one-size-fit-all solutions.

Pakistan has put in place a robust and comprehensive legal policy and administrative framework to counter the menace of illicit drugs. We take pride in having saved the world from over 1.86 billion doses of narcotics over the past three years. Last year, we seized over 342 tons of illicit drugs. As the one of the top contributors to international seizures beyond our territorial borders, we contributed to seizures of almost 25 tons of illicit drug around the world. Drug demand reduction, treatment and rehabilitation are high on our list of priorities.

With due respect for the sovereignty and rights of Member States, we are concerned about the emerging trends in some parts of the world to legalize the use of illicit drugs. That would give an unnecessary fillip to drug demand, thereby igniting the supply chain and having a direct fallout on our region and the world. Furthermore, the concepts involved that lack consensus, such as harm reduction and the so-called human rights-based approach, are likely to further complicate the issue. Over the years, we have all endeavoured to build a drug-free society, not a drug-tolerant society.

I urge that the existing United Nations drug control conventions be treated as a repository of core guiding principles for developing an international approach to combating drugs. We would expect greater focus on the prime target and transit countries in terms of mustering resources for capacity-building in the front-line States in the war against drugs. That should be commensurate to the threat with which they are confronted and proportionate to their core contributions to the cause. The international community needs to do more to counter the menace of narcotics in all its forms. I believe that that is possible through better coordination and cooperation among Member States.

In conclusion, let me say that what we decide to adopt in the coming days will help to determine the future of the global efforts to save our succeeding generations from the scourge of narcotic drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nkosinathi Nhleko, Minister of Police of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Nhleko (South Africa): The delegation of South Africa commends the President for his leadership and the manner in which he is conducting the proceedings of this special session. We pledge our support for the successful conclusion of the session. We equally commend both the Chair of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Chair of the Board tasked by the CND with the preparations for the special session for their unflinching determination in the preparations for this occasion.

The thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem has been convened at a critical juncture, when Member States are grappling with the challenge of how to effectively address and counter the world drug problem. South Africa recalls that it was the General Assembly that laid the foundation for the international fight against drug trafficking and its associated problems with the adoption of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961. Our overarching objective since the beginning of the war on drugs has been to promote the health and welfare of humankind. At the same time, we have all undertaken measures to restrict the use of drugs to medical and scientific purposes.

Today, we have gathered to review the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, which provided Member States with a balanced and integrated approach to continuing the international fight against the world drug problem. The three international drug control conventions

should serve as our basis going forward. On that note, South Africa takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to those instruments.

South Africa realizes that drug trafficking and drug abuse remain an issue of concern to many countries, especially developing countries. While progress has been made in addressing that scourge, we are cognizant that drug trafficking and its associated challenges remain a major threat to the security, health and socioeconomic architecture and development of many countries.

Like other countries, South Africa has implemented an integrated and balanced approach, modelled on the three major pillars of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, namely, a reduction in demand, a reduction in supply, and international cooperation. In that regard, South Africa has adopted law-enforcement, health, judicial and social policies and measures to deal with the negative impact of illicit drugs. Those policies are aimed at reducing drug addiction and abuse among the young, the rise in the burden of disease and the rise in violence and criminal activities associated with drugs.

Cautious in confronting the challenges at hand, South Africa adopted its national drug master plan for the period 2013-2017 to help the Government realize its vision of a society free of substance abuse, so that attention could be focused on raising the quality of life of all South Africans. At the continental level, we continue to make concerted efforts to implement existing regional instruments to counter the world drug problem.

In addition, South Africa welcomes the twenty-fifth meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, held in Algeria in September 2015, which culminated in the second Russia-Africa Anti-Drug Dialogue, which took place in Durban in March 2016. The Dialogue stressed the need to address the world drug problem by implementing a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to a reduction in drug supply and demand and its impact, as well as the rehabilitation and social integration of drug users and the implementation of alternative development programmes.

As the target date approaches for the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, South Africa believes that financial and technical assistance should be an integral part of our regional and international cooperation efforts. It will assist us in accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. My delegation therefore calls for effective and decisive measures to address illicit drug production and trafficking. That is purely because drug trafficking and its associated challenges undermine national safety and security and threaten to reverse the socioeconomic gains we have achieved as a young democracy. It is in that context that South Africa remains confident that we can all achieve a society free of substance abuse.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Nkaissery, Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya.

Mr. Nkaissery (Kenya): The Government of Kenya welcomes the convening of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. We commend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the Board tasked by the CND with the preparations for the special session and the Secretariat for their work in preparing this special session.

Kenya aligns itself with the position of the African Group, to be delivered by the representative of the Sudan.

My delegation notes that illicit drug cultivation, trafficking and abuse continue to cause adverse health and socioeconomic effects on people, thereby undermining the security and development of nations. As a result, the Government of Kenya reaffirms its commitment to implementing the provisions of the three international drug control conventions that form the basis of the world drug control strategy. In doing so, Kenya has enacted national policies and legislation to incorporate and implement the provisions of those treaties at the national level.

My delegation is convinced that the overall objective of drug control should be to eliminate the availability and use of illicit narcotic and psychotropic substances through evidence-based interventions on drug-demand reduction, drug-supply reduction, countering money-laundering and promoting international judicial cooperation among States to address other cross-cutting issues, including drugs and human rights, alternative development and the protection of vulnerable populations.

Kenya has made strides in the control and mitigation of drug abuse and has ratified the international drug control conventions. Kenya revised its Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in 2015, which sets the legal framework for drug control. In its effort to counter money-laundering, Kenya has set up a financial reporting centre that identifies the proceeds of crime, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In addition, Kenya has set up a national agency to coordinate the country's drug control strategy, which integrates the efforts of all stakeholders through the implementation of the country's national drug policy.

Furthermore, the war on drugs has received political support, with His Excellency the President of Kenya leading at the front. In 2015, the President ordered the destruction of ships laden with illicit drugs that were captured on the Kenyan coast. That has not only deterred illicit drug trafficking in the country but also sends a strong message to the world that Kenya is determined to be a drug-free nation.

The war on drugs comes at a great cost, and Kenya faces serious challenges owing to its porous borders, which are used for the flow of illicit small arms and human trafficking, as well as drug trafficking. Those crimes go hand in hand with money-laundering, which is used, so it is believed, to finance terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaida. In the recent past, Kenya has suffered major terrorist attacks, which has made the curtailment of drug trafficking and money-laundering a priority concern for our country.

We call on the United Nations and its agencies and programmes to enhance assistance for developing countries such as Kenya with capacity-building and training. We also call on developed countries and donor agencies to increase their funding, especially for transit countries, so that we can close the drug routes. We can achieve that goal if we do it together; regional and international cooperation is the key.

My delegation is convinced that this special session represents a critical step in the global drug control strategy, as it presents an opportunity to address successes, challenges and opportunities in the endeavour to attain a world free of drug abuse. It is therefore our desire that this session bring out the commitment of Member States to addressing the world drug problem, strengthening international cooperation and support for developing countries and, most important, providing hope to the thousands of people across the globe who are victims of drug abuse, illicit cultivation, illicit drug trafficking and money-laundering.

In conclusion, I assure the General Assembly of the support and participation of my delegation and of the Republic of Kenya in the fight against drugs.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan): It is my honour to speak today at the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which provides an opportunity not only to review the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, but also to develop new and effective measures to combat that evil.

Drug distribution and trafficking problems have acquired great importance at the national level in almost all regions of the world and have gone far beyond the social and criminal spheres. Combating drug trafficking and drug abuse is part of the fight against organized crime, international terrorism and extremism, and is being carried out through the implementation of various foreign policy, economic, legal, organizational, technical, operational, preventive and other measures.

In the sphere of shared interests, the Central Asian States are carrying out coordinated activities through their specialized drug-control coordinating agencies. The Republic of Tajikistan, like other States in the region that share a border with Afghanistan, is shouldering a significant burden in combating drug trafficking. Tajikistan therefore pays special attention to the strengthening and development of international cooperation. It seeks to advance initiatives aimed at joint and coordinated actions by all interested countries and international organizations.

It is necessary to continue strengthening socioeconomic assistance to the people of Afghanistan in order to address issues of employment and economic recovery. Security issues in our region are inextricably linked with issues of combating terrorism and extremism, which are also fuelled by income from drug production.

From 1996 to 2012, the Government of Tajikistan implemented four national drug control programmes. An important step in Tajikistan's implementation of its anti-drug policy was the approval of the presidential decree entitled "National strategy to fight against

illicit drug-trafficking in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2013-2020", the main goal of which is to significantly reduce the illicit distribution of narcotic drugs and their non-medical use and the degree of impact of illicit trafficking on health, safety, society and State security, and to expand international cooperation.

From 1996 to 2015, in the territory of Tajikistan, more than 113 tons of drugs were seized, including 34 tons of heroin and 38 tons of opium. In 2015 alone, around five tons of drugs were seized by Tajikistan law-enforcement agencies. Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan have made it possible to reduce the recorded number of drug-related crimes in the country.

As a result of the measures adopted by the Government of Tajikistan, and with the support of donor countries and international organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, our country has achieved certain successes in the field of drug control and has established close cooperation with such interested countries as the Russian Federation, the United States, China, Afghanistan and other countries.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm that international cooperation in the field of drug control issues will remain one of the priority tasks for the Government of Tajikistan.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mr. Rui Jorge Carneiro Mangueira, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Angola.

Mr. Mangueira (Angola): On this occasion, Angola expresses its support and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the leading United Nations entity for addressing and combating the world drug problem.

Angola welcomes the adoption of this special session's final outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). That instrument provides a new impetus for cooperation aimed at tackling the drug problem. In order to achieve the resolution's implementation throughout the world, it will be necessary to establish and strengthen targeted cooperation among countries and regional and international organizations.

In today's world, the drug situation remains difficult and complex, making it imperative for Member States to reach consensus on implementing a robust and effective system aimed at addressing the threats posed by new psychotropic substances at the global level. It would be appropriate to simultaneously develop efforts to strengthen the ability to put hazardous substances on the international agenda in cooperation with the World Health Organization.

Another problem is the emergence of the Internet as an online market for drugs. The international community needs to proactively address that aspect of the drug problem in collaboration with enforcement agencies, industries, civil society and other partners in order to find effective ways to prevent online drug trafficking.

With regard to international security, the drug market is the most dynamic of criminal markets. Drug trafficking and drug production are still among the most profitable criminal activities for organized crime groups globally and are closely related to terrorism. In that regard, the Angolan delegation would like to make the following observations.

First, we must safeguard the overall authority of the existing drug control system. Since the elimination of the scourge of drugs is a common responsibility of humankind, the three international conventions on drug control and the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action should continue to serve as our main guidelines. In particular, the potential of the three conventions can be used better, with full respect for their purposes. We should do a better job of implementing the principles of common and shared responsibility and a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach, as identified in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, in order to reach the maximum degree of international consensus.

Secondly, in recent years there have been voices calling for the legalization of drugs and raising questions about the three United Nations conventions and other existing international drug control mechanisms. That is not conducive to the sound development of international drug control mechanisms. We must fully recognize the seriously harmful effects of drugs on human physical and mental health, and we must resist the legalization of drugs, while taking into account a focused approach to health, education, counselling and reintegration.

Thirdly, this year we began the important work of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). That will require a collective partnership and solid commitment. We

cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without a bold and courageous collaboration between Member States and the United Nations.

With regard to the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action approved in 2009, as well as the implementation of the three conventions on drugs, Angola has adopted domestic legislation to control the drug problem and has created institutions that can run the overall policy to counter that phenomenon. The fight against illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse are part of the Government's priorities and its programme for the period of 2012 to 2017. An anti-drug programme was developed by the Angolan Government in partnership with the inter-ministerial committee on drug abuse control.

The document that was adopted as result of that collaboration represented a step towards implementing the 2009 Plan of Action. It includes the following measures, among others: the reduction of supply, which consists of implementing a faster and more effective system to combat threats in that regard; reduction in demand, which consists of re-relaunching drug prevention policies; and international cooperation, as an objective embodied in the national anti-drug strategy, through the adoption of a strong position in international forums and with partner countries. Angola reaffirms its ongoing commitment to adopting legislative, administrative and policy measures in line with the international instruments to combat drugs, so that together we can fight this global scourge.

Finally, Angola believes that this General Assembly special session on the world drug problem represents an important milestone for the implementation of policies aimed at combating a phenomenon that affects the lives of millions of people worldwide. We call for an international anti-drug policy that is more focused on the human aspects of the problem and on public health.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.

United Nations A/S-30/PV.2

General Assembly
Thirtieth special session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 April 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. González Franco (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance of the Republic of India.

Mr. Jaitley (India): I am delighted to join all representatives here today for this historic special session, as we gather to deliberate on the world drug problem, which continues to pose challenges across the world. We are meeting in this forum seven years after the adoption of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

We are also meeting only months after adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which will guide our efforts to build peaceful, prosperous and secure societies. The world drug problem impacts our ability to attain the objectives of our collective 2030 Agenda. It is a problem of global dimensions and requires collaboration across borders.

The three conventions on drugs adopted by the international community have served well in limiting and managing the drug problem. They have provided Member States with sufficient flexibility to fine-tune domestic laws to be commensurate with the realities and challenges of the twenty-first century. We strongly believe in the centrality of the three international drug control conventions in addressing and countering the world drug problem. We firmly believe that the conventions provide ample scope to incorporate the human face of the drug problem.

Terrorism constitutes one of the most dangerous threats to civilized society today. Terrorism knows no borders, and terrorists continue to strike cities and innocent civilians across continents. The growing nexus of drug trafficking and terrorist networks endangers peace, security and stability across regions. We must continue to toughen our collective fight against those evils.

India is firmly committed to the three United Nations conventions on drug matters. As a supplier of licit opiate raw material to the world and a traditional licit opium cultivator for centuries, India is fully conscious of its responsibility to eradicate any illicit cultivation, reduce demand and implement preventive and enforcement measures.

National efforts, however intense and sincere, cannot adequately deal with the drug problem. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation is essential in that area. One such area requiring extensive international cooperation is coordinated action against the emergence and abuse of new psychoactive substances. India recognizes the global importance of the licit trade in precursor chemicals and the need to

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effectively control the illicit trafficking in precursors for use in drug manufacture.

Several steps are being undertaken to strengthen supply- and demand-reduction activities, as well as treatment and after-care facilities, through a public-health approach. India is committed to ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking and ensuring the availability of drugs for palliative care, pain relief and opioid substitution therapy for cancer patients and drug abuse victims. In May, 2015, India provided notice of uniform and simplified rules regarding essential narcotic drugs, so as to remove regulatory barriers.

Money-laundering, illicit financial flows and the proceeds of crime generated by drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime remain major challenges The criminal networks and drug syndicates can be effectively busted only by disrupting their financial flows. I am happy to share the fact that India and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) hosted the Networking the Networks meeting in November 2015 in New Delhi in order to enable fast interregional cooperation in that context.

To further augment regional cooperation in the combating of crimes related to drugs and money-laundering in the region, India, in coordination with UNODC, is in the advanced stages of setting up a regional coordination centre for South Asia, known as the South Asia Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre, with India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives as founding members.

The task ahead for the next three years is arduous indeed. I am confident that this special session and its outcome will provide new impetus to national, bilateral, regional and international actions towards realizing a world free of drug abuse in our lifetime and achieving the sustainable future we want.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alain Berset, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs of the Swiss Confederation.

Mr. Berset (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): In 1998, the previous special session on drugs proclaimed: "A drug-free world — We can do it!" Today, the contours of a new paradigm — placing the human being, and not substances, at the heart of drug policies — are taking shape. That development is very important for Switzerland and is to be commended. We therefore support the recommendations of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which call for improved access to medicines. The suffering of sick persons owing to insufficient treatment of pain is an unacceptable side effect of the international drug-control regime. Rectifying that situation is a humanitarian imperative.

Likewise, the call for abstinence cannot be and must not be our sole response to drug consumption. We must also adopt practical measures aimed at mitigating the nefarious human and social repercussions of addiction, including the risk of HIV infection and other communicable diseases. Hence, risk reduction is an indispensable pillar for drug policy. It is an indispensable pillar that goes hand in hand with prevention and therapy. Such risk reduction must be coordinated with the repressive measures. We are aware that the repression of open drug markets increases health risks. An integrated and balanced drug policy can only be successful with close cooperation between police services and public-health agencies.

I mentioned that placing the individual at the heart of drug policy requires criminal justice with a human face. In that regard, Switzerland reaffirms its opposition to the use of capital punishment in all places and under any circumstances, and we regret that the death-penalty issue was not included in the outcome document. We had the opportunity to put forward our position on that point this morning when the document was adopted (see A/S-30/PV.1). It is inadmissible for the death penalty, an ineffective measure, still to be used as a response to drug-related offences.

We must seize the opportunity afforded to us by this special session, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), to implement an international drug policy that places the human being at the centre, a policy that is based on health and human rights.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Patrick Kanner, Minister of Urban Cohesion, Youth and Sports of the French Republic.

Mr. Kanner (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully endorses the statement made by Commissioner Mimica on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

The adverse effects of drug use on public health, especially on young people, are well established. The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that in a recent report.

We are highly aware of the threat that drug trafficking poses to our security and the rule of law. Violence goes hand in hand with trafficking. Drug trafficking is also one of the ways that certain terrorist networks use to finance their operations, against which we have been working as strenuously as possible. France is, unfortunately, well placed to make such a statement.

Faced with this triple threat — to health, society and security — France is implementing a comprehensive and integrated response, not only fighting trafficking and money-laundering, but also promoting prevention, medical care and rehabilitation. Such a comprehensive approach is one recommended by the three international conventions, which offer both a shared legal framework for harmonizing our legislation and organizing our cooperation and the possibility of adopting responses adapted to the national and regional contexts of States parties. The conventions are the base for our engagement. That common ground must be combined with respect for human rights.

France reaffirms its consistent opposition to the death penalty in all places and under all circumstances. France also calls for respect for the international commitments in the field of human rights, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

When it comes to responding to the drug problem, I wish to highlight three priority areas of action in which my country is fully invested.

First, in the health field, France has developed numerous risk-reduction programmes that have in particular made it possible to considerably reduce the HIV infection rate.

Secondly, we are strengthening the fight against trafficking and the illicit financial flows resulting from the drug problem by focusing on the use of chemical precursors for drug production and by strengthening our police and customs cooperation, as well as by developing judicial cooperation, in order to dismantle the networks, confiscate traffickers' assets and fight money-laundering and corruption.

Thirdly, we are strengthening prevention, which is a crucial component in our arsenal because it is one of the ways of reducing drug demand. It is in that spirit that France today organized, together with Sweden, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and WHO, a special event on prevention. It is called "Listen First" — listen first to understand and then act.

Whatever our national characteristics may be, we have the same concern, a shared concern: that of stopping drug trafficking. In the face of the seriousness of that challenge, our only choice is to come together. That is why France welcomes the adoption of a road map today by our General Assembly, including the operational recommendations for responding to the various dimensions of the world drug problem. It is now up to us to implement the road map with a clear mind, with determination and with the utmost effort for our youth.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oliver Letwin, Minister for the Cabinet Office of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Letwin (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this special session as a unique opportunity to enhance the global approach to the drug problem and to establish a clear road map for a new political declaration and plan of action on international cooperation toward an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem in 2019. We must ensure that our work is fully integrated with the global Sustainable Development Goals, because the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and our efforts to address the harm caused by drugs are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The United Kingdom welcomes the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). It combines ambitious goals with operational recommendations that all Member States should consider implementing.

The United Kingdom is delivering a modern, balanced, evidence-based response to drugs in accordance with the United Nations conventions. There has been a reduction in drug misuse among adults and young people over the past ten years in England and Wales, and more people are recovering from their dependency now than in 2009. We are currently developing a new drug strategy, which we will publish shortly. Our 2016 drug strategy will build on our current balanced approach of reducing demand, restricting

supply and building recovery. We will tackle drugs as a key driver of crime.

Responding to the global challenges posed by new psychoactive substances is a priority for the United Kingdom. In January, we introduced new legislation, the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. It introduces a general ban on the production, supply, import and export of all new psychoactive substances and complements our wider, balanced response.

During the past three years, the United Kingdom has worked to demonstrate global leadership on that issue with the long-term objective of establishing a sustainable international system that can deal effectively with new psychoactive substances. Our work has included forming the International Action Group on New Psychoactive Substances, an informal group of States and international organizations that seeks to coordinate and drive the international response. The international community has made significant progress, but there is more to be done. We must redouble our efforts to meet the challenge of new psychoactive substances, including through data-sharing, the exchange of policy ideas and international cooperation to bring the most harmful substances under international control.

The United Kingdom is able to implement a smart, proportionate criminal-justice response at each stage of the process. That includes alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offences, the integration of criminal justice and health services so as to ensure that offenders who misuse drugs get the support they need, and independently produced sentencing guidelines that ensure consistency and proportionality in sentencing. Importantly, the United Kingdom delivers proportionality in criminal justice and good health outcomes while retaining the criminal status of drug possession.

The United Kingdom has a proud history of championing human rights, and we oppose the use of the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. The United Kingdom does not provide criminal justice or other assistance that may result in a death sentence being applied. We will hold international agencies funded by the United Kingdom to account for compliance with that principle and all other human rights obligations.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to reducing the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases among people who inject drugs. The agreed target of reducing HIV transmission by 50 per cent by 2015 has not been fully met, but we now have the tools to achieve that reduction at our disposal. We have clear evidence that the package of measures set out in the World Health Organization's 2014 consolidated guidelines are effective. The United Kingdom is proud to be the second largest international funder of HIV prevention, care and treatment, and we will continue to take a leading role on the issue, including at the 2016 High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS here in the General Assembly in June.

Up to 5.5 billion people live in countries with low or non-existent access to controlled medicines. Too many people live and die in avoidable pain. The United Kingdom will continue to invest in supporting health systems across the world, and we will strengthen international efforts to make material progress in that area in accordance with the road maps set by the global Sustainable Development Goals and the accompanying targets.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Dunne, Minister of the Interior, Associate Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Conservation of New Zealand.

Mr. Dunne (New Zealand): In three days' time, as we catch our trains and board our planes to return home, the world will ask what was achieved here in New York at this special session of the General Assembly. The question is the most important question that could be asked of delegates: what will we collectively have to show for our efforts?

The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which we adopted at the previous meeting, is broad, but New Zealand notes with strong regret the failure to achieve consensus on the inclusion of a reference to the death penalty. It may not be in the outcome document, but, make no mistake, the death penalty has no place in civilized society. Blocking the inclusion of references to it not only does not change that fact but does a disservice to those who seek to reduce the harm caused by drugs. The outcome document talks of reiterating, reaffirming and intensifying our efforts, but unless they result in tangible actions that make a difference to people's lives, they will be just words, and critics will hold them up as further evidence of an international system that promises much but achieves little.

There has been a welcome development in recent years in the form of a shift away from treating drug

issues as primarily a law-and-order responsibility to a health focus, but let us not rest on our laurels. Last year, at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, I spoke of the importance of the three fundamental pillars of drug policy: proportion, compassion and innovation. New Zealand has woven those principles into its approach to addressing drug issues and has included them as central tenets in our recently released national drug policy.

But perhaps there is a fourth pillar that is missing: the pillar of boldness. Incremental movement, if any, has been the norm for drug policy development for as long as I can remember, and the movement has not always been forward. But as encouraging as the shift has been, the fact is that, compared to the global narcotic industries, we are moving at a glacial pace, hamstrung by a grossly outdated and excessively punitive approach. So I put it to those assembled here in the Hall that, globally, we need to be bolder in our approaches. With boldness come some obstacles, for no great success was ever achieved without failure. The great American inventor Thomas Edison, on his development of the light bulb famously remarked, "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that don't work."

I suggest that, globally, drug policy is approaching its own 10,000 failed attempts, and it is time to flick the enlightenment switch on. So, we say that responsible regulation is the key to reducing drug-related harm and achieving long-term success in drug control approaches. But the key word here is "responsible". We must not conflate boldness with recklessness; changes in policy must ensure that the likelihood of harm is minimized. It is imperative that any move to a regulated market be an authority-led process and that we do not find ourselves in the position of playing catch-up.

Of course, that is easier said than done. Certainly, in New Zealand we allowed an unregulated, under-the-radar, new psychoactive substances industry to steal a march before it was brought into a regulated system through our Psychoactive Substances Act. That Act allows for such products to be brought to market if they can be proven to be low-risk, which essentially puts the onus of proof back onto the industry.

For those nations with federal systems of Government, in which individual States have pushed ahead with drug law reforms, the need for getting the balance right is critical. There are now a number of examples where a reformist cannabis policy has simply outstripped the ability of robust regulation to control the substance — a situation that ultimately damages the reform movement and increases the potential for harm.

Currently, New Zealand's position is this: if cannabis is to be used for medical purposes, it must be subject to the same testing processes as any other therapeutic pharmaceuticals. Identifying the greatest therapeutic benefits and determining the most appropriate ratios, dosage and delivery mechanisms will come only through a robust, scientific approach. Otherwise, we are essentially flying blind and hoping for the best, an approach that flies in the face of an evidence-based medicines policy. That said, for those with a terminal or debilitating illness, New Zealand's position is that a compassionate approach is warranted, and ensuring that such an approach exists is a priority. New Zealand also calls on the pharmaceutical industry to step up and invest more in its research and development of cannabis-based products.

In closing, let me return to my introductory question: what will we achieve here in New York at this General Assembly special session? The answer will be seen in the changes that we see on a State-by-State basis in the coming years. If nations continue to muddle along, choosing the easy options and throwing the problems to their police and judiciaries, then the answer will be very little. But if the pace of change picks up, appropriate regulation is put in place and bold, innovative, compassionate and proportionate policy thrives, then the answer will be progress. I think that I know which of those two options I prefer.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Wikström, Minister of Health Care, Public Health and Sport of the Kingdom of Sweden.

Mr. Wikström (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Commission on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

Sweden welcomes the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). I thank all those involved for their hard work. We are taking an important step towards a more balanced and more coherent drug policy. The focus on people's health is long overdue. The resolution helps send that message, and now the work must really begin.

The main responsibility for the real work falls on Member States. Drugs threaten people's safety and security through violence, corruption, and organized crime throughout the world in extremely varying degrees. Our realities vary, but we all share the threats to people's health. We must therefore all invest in real preventive measures that work to ensure the future health and success of our children's lives worldwide.

Such a future requires that we do substantially more than we are doing today, especially given the fact that just one out of six people with drug-use disorders has access to proper, evidence-based treatment. We need to ensure such access and treatment, as well as access to risk and harm reduction, in a broader public-health approach. We need to do our utmost to prevent the family tragedies that have resulted from drugs, and not seek to regulate or legalize even more of what is harming them. I believe that no coherent public health policy can include making available and accessible even more substances that are damaging to health. No public- health policy should unleash yet another legal global market in products that harm us and those around us.

Public-health policy must be science-based. It must be evidence-based. It must be based on up-to-date and ongoing scientific research, as illustrated, for example, by the recent World Health Organization (WHO) report on the health and social effects of non-medical cannabis use. Therefore, in our shared goals, we can work within our respective contexts and within and among nations.

Civil society has an enormous contribution to make, as it has done in supporting Sweden's preparations for this special session. We did not always reach an immediate agreement among all of us, as is the case in any country or within the United Nations. But we know that a focus on broad dialogue, mutual respect and all of the evidence are what pushes policy forward, and that including those who have personally experienced drug-use disorders is essential.

Target 3.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals addresses the prevention and treatment of drug use and drug-use disorders. We therefore call upon the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and WHO to strengthen cooperation aimed at implementing and guiding a public-health approach. We also call for all human rights organizations to stay involved and to keep up the pressure on us, the policy-makers, to protect the right to health, the rights of children, the rights of women and the right to a fair trial and proportionate sentencing for prisoners.

The United Nations drug conventions must be implemented in accordance with the principles of human rights. They are not parallel systems. Accordingly, we also call for stronger cooperation between the UNODC and United Nations human rights agencies. The United Nations system must now be specific as to how to fully support Member States, not only with regard to what works and needs to be done. It should also ask for delivery and results.

We therefore call on all those involved to work together to make the outcome document of the special session a reality. The cartels globalize what works for them. We must do so too, not out of defeatism and despair, but in the interest of health and hope.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Milton Romani Gerner, Secretary General of the National Drugs Council of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Romani Gerner (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Juan Andrés Roballo, the head of our delegation, was unfortunately prevented from coming here because of an emergency weather situation in our country.

The General Assembly is the highest and irreplaceable forum for frank debate, dialogue and consensus. Consensus can be genuine only if it permits and reflects diversity. The models and strategies with which we have confronted the world drug problem have not yielded the predicted results. New or renewed approaches, based on national laws and specificities to give a more effective and human response, have emerged.

The model known as the war on drugs throughout our region, promoted since the 1970s, is based on a skewed interpretation of the conventions and has thrown our strategy off balance. It has been unable to control the phenomenon, and, far from that, on occasion has caused damage more serious than that caused by drugs.

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has shown great intellectual courage, has said, "I believe that drugs have destroyed many lives, but wrong Government policies have destroyed many more." He wrote:

> "The war on drugs has not succeeded. Some estimate that enforcing global prohibition costs at

least $100 billion a year, but as many as 300 million people now use drugs worldwide, contributing to a global illicit market with a turnover of $330 billion a year...

"Prohibition has had little impact on the supply of or demand for drugs ... The widespread criminalization and punishment of people who use drugs and the over-crowded prisons mean that the war on drugs is, to a significant degree, a war on drug users — a war on people."

Mind-altering substances with psychoactive effects have been a resource for human beings throughout history, and that use has had many variations and motivations — cultural, religious and now commercial. Those substances have been used to benefit health and have also posed risks to health. What is new that we must incorporate into our thinking is that drugs are merchandise. They are special commodities that circulate and are consumed and generate profit. They also circulate in an illicit market, generating major profits that re-enter the formal economy through money-laundering. Market analysis is indispensable for dealing with that issue.

The current control regime based on strict prohibition seems to have shown itself to be inadequate, confusing and contradictory, if not prejudicial, for achieving the ultimate ends proposed in the conventions. While it is hoped that States will comply with the conventions, it is also hoped that those conventions will be clear, precise and consistent.

It has not been possible to efficiently regulate the circulation of such substances, which pose serious health risks, while at the same time ensuring respect for rights. In fact, the control mechanisms used and the agencies applying the laws have increased the level of danger. We are here to reaffirm that the ultimate purpose of the conventions is to safeguard rights — the right to well-being and health, the right of access to controlled substances for medical and scientific uses, and the right to relieve pain, to mitigate harm and to cooperate with the appropriate uses of drugs.

The preparatory process for the special session incited a discussion, which we welcome, but that discussion is not sufficiently reflected in the consensual text. There are aspects that many States, including Uruguay, consider inadequate, such as the urgent need to adopt a moratorium on the death penalty for drug offences, to ensure the proportionality of punishment, to decriminalize the possession and use of drugs, and to maintain a focus on harm and risk reduction.

The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), adopted by consensus despite its deficiencies constitutes a step forward. The document expressly establishes the recognition that the three international drug control conventions provide States with enough flexibility to formulate and apply national drug policies in accordance with their priorities and needs.

But the most important part of the preparatory process that brought us to this special session is the environment of debate and dialogue, which is already generating a new consensus on the basis of diversity. The new language that is now being proposed calls for a society free from drug abuse; it should exercise the freedom to admit that harm reduction is an excellent approach to preventing abuse, that regulating markets is indispensable precisely in order to prevent abuse of any kind. Risk and harm reduction can serve as a model that cuts through supply and demand issues, has humanist virtues and ensures the respect for rights.

Uruguay has adopted strategic thinking on the necessary regulation of all markets. We are implementing a comprehensive approach, which led us in 2006, for example, to regulate the market of anonymous corporations for offshore operations, which we eliminated. We created several tools to sever the backbone of drug trafficking. On another plane, we also regulated the tobacco market, and we are doing the same with alcohol, despite great resistance from the markets.

Uruguay, subject to the provisions of its Constitution and its laws, in the exercise of its sovereign rights and in conformity with all international instruments, is developing, using a holistic approach, a model for the regulation of the cannabis market. Uruguay has strong institutions to safeguard public health. We have a system of continuous and rigorous evaluations. The new approach is appropriate to our history and to Uruguayan cultural specifics and our tradition. We do not claim to have a solution applicable to other countries. The plan is being operationalized in dialogue with civil-society organizations, with the States in the region, and with the cooperation of the University of the Republic, research centres and associations of health-care professionals. The International Narcotics Control Board just visited our country. We had an excellent dialogue, going beyond the disputed views on the

conventions, and the Board demonstrated its interest in following the initiative.

The war on drugs has ended. It was a senseless war with a fundamentalist approach characterized by rigid exhibitionism and one-track thinking, which has also been brought to an end. Before, we had unleashed an absurd war against substances, and we proposed to eradicate all crops and to establish the dystopia of a drug-free world. That war was senseless also because of the disproportionate punishments for the crimes involved, the application of the death penalty and the criminalization of users. The creation of an indiscriminate front of repression against the entire drug chain led to an increase in violence without weakening transnational organized crime.

The worst thing about the indiscriminate war was that it weakened the legitimacy of the just enforcement of laws. The extended front made it impossible to concentrate repression on the most important levels: money-laundering and organized crime. Such a manner of regulating the illicit market also generated impunity. Allow us a little literary license here, although it could also be an expression of vanity:

> "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant and a time to harvest; a time to kill and a time to heal." (*The Holy Bible, Ecclesiastes 3:1-3*)

I quote that verse even though I am an atheist and a layperson. But the time for peace has come — a time to guarantee rights and a time to promote health, a time to approach the world drug problem from the viewpoint of human development. It is time for the General Assembly to open new avenues towards a new focus and time to build bridges of dialogue and understanding. For once and for all, we must rescue humankind from what Pope Francis called the existential periphery.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Ndiaye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At a time when the international community is undertaking the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking continue to threaten the stability of States. Indeed, in all regions worldwide, among the significant social harm caused by drug trafficking are violence, exclusion, the fragmentation of social institutions and human rights violations. It is therefore of critical importance for the individual in society to be placed at the heart of policies to combat drugs. Such policies need to be based on the principle of common but shared responsibility in line with the international drug control conventions and other relevant international legal instruments, including in the area of human rights, of course, by drawing upon existing mandates.

Senegal is firmly committed to cooperation with the international community. We consider that the three international drug control conventions constitute the cornerstone of international drug control. Given its strategic position, West Africa is particularly affected by drug trafficking, a scourge that has disastrous consequences on people's health, especially on the health of young people and women, as is attested by growing disease outbreaks, such as HIV/AIDS, drug addiction and psychological disorders. Drug users are also exposed to violent crime and early death resulting from their poor health condition. That is compounded by growing insecurity in the countries concerned.

On another note, porous borders, poverty and political instability are all factors that exacerbate the vulnerability of the West African region, which has become a hub for international drug trafficking, with alarming increases in the number of consumers. Those illicit drug flows are all the more damaging to the progress of our societies, as they jeopardize good governance, foster corruption and go hand in hand with illicit activities, such as terrorism and its financing, firearms trafficking, money-laundering, maritime piracy, human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

We need to engage the countries of the region in formulating and implementing a strategy to combat that scourge. working in a collective synergy. A pillar of such cooperation was the adoption in 2008 of the Economic Community of West African States Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa and the Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, related organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa, which was renewed in 2013. It set up a framework for cooperation between member States in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and organized crime.

We are at the crossroads of the Sahel and the Atlantic. Senegal has made the fight against drug trafficking and

related crimes a national priority. That commitment was specifically translated into the strengthening of our institutional capacity in that area with the establishment of a Central Office for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking. We set up the Joint Port Control Unit to assist with container control in the port of Dakar. Such institutions also include an interministerial committee to combat drugs, and we have strengthened national legislation in this area. In 2007 we adopted a law that criminalizes drug trafficking, thereby enabling the suppression of the production, import, export and international transport of drugs.

With the support of the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), Senegal has also adopted specific measures to improve the national systems for dealing with addiction via the establishment in December 2014 of a Centre for the Integrated Management of Addiction in Dakar.

The measures taken by States at the national level to improve the legal framework are not in themselves sufficient to produce satisfactory results, given the fact that their external effects can often be harmful to other countries. There is therefore an urgent need to strengthen our strategies to counter that threat. We must tackle the root causes. We must have strong cooperation at the subregional, regional and international levels. In that regard, it is necessary to promote greater coherence. We must reinforce coordination among the mechanisms and entities of the United Nations, such as UNODC, the United Nations Development Programme, the Human Rights Council, WHO and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, even though incarceration has failed to yield the desired effects, my delegation is of the view that the legalization and decriminalization of drug use is not the best option. Such policies can jeopardize the significant efforts undertaken by many countries, including African countries, in the fight against the illicit production, trafficking and use of drugs.

The adoption of new approaches, based on flexibility and proportionality in the penalties imposed on detained personal users, combined with tougher laws against the incitement to consumption and trafficking, should be seriously considered on a case-by-case basis and be based on the situation in specific countries. In the same vein, measures aimed at ensuring the prevention of substance abuse must include education, awareness-raising, the enforcement of laws and health-care initiatives. Such measures need to be encouraged and sustained. Respect for human rights must also be a critical crosscutting element of policies aimed at combating trafficking and drug use. Assistance in capacity-building is very necessary, especially as regards improving intelligence-sharing, training health-care personnel, and the compilation and assessment of data, as well as the capacity-building of stakeholders. Nor must we forget that security-sector reform and justice reform can be used in a favourable way to tackle drug-related challenges.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Camille Junior Edouard, Minister of Justice and Public Security of the Republic of Haiti .

Mr. Edouard (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It is with great interest that I am speaking in my capacity as Minister of Justice and Public Security of the Republic of Haiti at this rostrum on the occasion of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, a topic that shows the willingness of the Assembly to discuss and go further into the issue of drugs in all its dimensions and complexities with a view to finding tailored solutions.

First, I commend the President, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for having drawn the attention of Member States to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly in that regard. The interest of the Assembly in this topic can be seen from the momentum that has been generated to bring together the efforts of all Member States to effectively combat the scourge of drugs with all the difficulties that it poses to health, the economy and the stability of States.

It is evident that, despite the numerous initiatives undertaken by Member States jointly with international bodies, including the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime, the drug situation worldwide continues to paint a bleak and alarming picture. Illicit drug trafficking has led to such evils as corruption, violence, weapons-smuggling, human trafficking and money-laundering. That situation has aroused the highest attention of the Haitian Government.

Our statement in the framework of this special session will focus on the issue of drugs in Haiti, the outcomes of actions taken, the legal framework, the institutions involved and the outlook of the Government of which I am part.

From 2011 to 2015, the activities of the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs and the work of the Directorate of Pharmacy, Medicines and Traditional Medicine provide an overview of the issue of illicit drug trafficking in our country. Haiti, owing to its geographical position, unfortunately lures drug traffickers, who use our space as a hub to transit drugs, mainly cocaine and marijuana.

The operations undertaken over the past five years reveal an increase in the number of drug-seizure operations and measures carried out by the Office for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking. The data from the Haitian Observatory on Drugs reveal an increase in the number of operations conducted from 2011 to 2013, and then there was a reduction from 2013 to 2014. Many factors can explain the annual variation in the number of drug operations. However, it should be noted that, since 2012, efforts have been made by the Haitian Government, with the support of international partners, to improve law enforcement. For example, in June 2012, the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs increased the number of its agents from 30 to the current 100. In 2013, our country inaugurated a naval base in Les Cayes to combat sea-based trafficking in the south of Haiti. In 2014, the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs had some 20 all-terrain vehicles and 2 speedboats to improve our intervention operations.

Those are some areas where we are addressing the issue. From 2011 to 2015, seizures of marijuana reached 9,612 kilograms and 540 kilograms of cocaine. Assuming the prices of a kilo of cocaine and a kilo marijuana on the Haitian market were more than $40,000 and $2,000, respectively, the market value of those seizures would be more than $20 million for the cocaine and $19 million dollars for the marijuana. In the period from 2011 to 2015, there were also seizures of crack, LSD, amphetamines and, recently, heroin in the case of the *Manzanares* vessel. However, it should be noted that the drug problem at the national level especially pertains to marijuana and cocaine.

The Haitian Government has adopted legal provisions with a view to combating this scourge, including the 29 November 1994 law establishing a civilian police force, called the Haitian National Police, and organizing its functions; the 7 August 2001 law on the control of and crackdown on illicit drug trafficking; the 21 February 2001 law on the laundering of assets derived from illicit drug trafficking and other serious crimes; the 8 September 2004 decree establishing an administrative body called the Counter-Corruption Unit; the 14 November 2013 law sanctioning money-laundering and the financing of terrorism in Haiti; and the 31 May 2012 decree that established the National Commission for the Fight against Drugs.

At the international level, we have adhered to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by its Protocol of 25 March 1972; issued the 4 November 1990 decree ratifying the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which was adopted in Vienna on 19 December 1988; and adopted the 1996 Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

The national institutions engaged in the fight against drug trafficking in Haiti are the National Commission for the Fight against Drugs, whose task is to set national policy for combating drugs and coordinating the efforts of the various State agencies and non-governmental organizations participating in the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking; the Haitian Observatory on Drugs, a permanent body of the National Commission whose main task is to collect relevant data for the compiling of statistics to provide a picture of illicit drug use; the Ministry of Public Health and Population, which is working with importers, pharmacies, psychiatric centres, hospitals and the Haitian National Police on narcotics control and the analyses of substances; the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs, whose operations led to an overall reduction in drug-related activities in Haiti; and the Haitian Information System on Drugs, which is a national network that brings together all the actors involved in the fight against drugs with the goal of collecting, analysing and disseminating data in the areas of combating drugs in order to assist the State in making informed decisions.

Most of the non-State institutions are engaged in helping children and young people. Examples of those institutions are the Volunteer Organization for the Development of Haiti, which carries out prevention efforts in schools and through youth centres, and the Association for the Prevention of Alcoholism and other Chemical Addictions.

I cannot end my speech without mentioning the challenge in Haiti of deportees and street children. The information I have just mentioned is only a small part of the information necessary to assess the drug

situation in Haiti. Many studies must still be carried out. In particular, a national study on the prevalence of drugs in the general population is needed.

In terms of assessing the National Strategy to Combat Drugs for 2010-2015 and the development of a new strategy for 2016-2020, the Government intends to develop various actions to curb drug trafficking and to protect the population against the abuse of these substances. In addition, the Government will carry out research on drug issues to enable a better understanding of this phenomenon. Finally, a task force to monitor the emergence of new drugs that are not listed in international conventions will be initiated.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to thank once again the President of the General Assembly and the representatives of all Member States. I hope that the discussions that will take place in the panels will help inform the discussions already held in previous sessions to bolster the fight against drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, Deputy Minister for Social Development of the Republic of South Africa, who will speak on behalf of the States members of the African Union.

Ms. Bogopane-Zulu (South Africa): Allow me to first convey the greetings of Her Excellency Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. We wish to commend the President on the manner in which he is conducting these proceedings.

We can assure the General Assembly that the policy organs of the African Union have not only been active, but indeed proactive and forward-looking in the area of drug control over the past four years, including promoting a balanced and integrated approach to drug control. In 2012, the Conference of Ministers adopted the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control for the period of 2013 to 2017, based on the 2009 United Nations Political Declaration and Plan of Action. The Ministers also adopted the African common position, which formed the basis for negotiations in preparation for this particular active event, endorsed by the African Union Executive Council and the Heads of State.

In accordance with its Plan of Action on Drug Control, which is due for review next year, the African Union emphasizes evidence-based responses to drug control to its member States in order to curb the health and social consequences that drugs cause. Respect for human rights in dealing with the issue of drugs has been the departure point for the ministers in charge of drug control. For that reason, drug control is clustered alongside health and population matters in the African Union, under the specialized technical committee for ministers responsible for drugs, population and health, of which I have the honour to be the first Chairperson.

In accordance with the African Union's theme for this year, namely, "2016: African Year of Human Rights, With Particular Focus on the Rights of Women", we would all agree that women are also the face of drug trafficking on our beautiful continent. Hence, in the African common position for the special session on the world drug problem, adopted by the specialized technical committee ministers of health, population and drug control in April 2015, the health-based approach to drug control is among the pillars that inform the 10 operative paragraphs. The common position reflects the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control, for instance, the implementation matrix of its Output 2.4, which requires member States to have available comprehensive, accessible, evidence-informed, ethical and human-rights-based drug use prevention, dependence treatment and after-care services.

Finally, we wish to underline the usefulness of a regional approach. In the case of the African Union, representatives can imagine that 54 countries are at different stages of developing their national drug strategies and legislation. Representatives will also appreciate that member States think differently about drugs. The advantages of the meetings of the African Union Commission and its organs are that the different approaches can be openly discussed — one Member State cannot prescribe to all the others — and, most important, member States follow democratic approaches to include those affected by decisions that concern them, which emphasizes the principle of nothing about us without us. In that regard, we wish to borrow lessons learned in the fight against HIV and AIDS by employing a multisectoral response that creates an environment where drug users can, and should, be able to form, among other things, support groups to enable them to begin to access psychosocial services and support.

In the spirit of self-representation, we recommend the establishment of support groups in very focused areas as we take this political declaration forward.

Such groups should be established in police stations, hospitals, churches, tribal councils and any relevant formation where people access particular services and enjoy privacy. We also recommend the joint training by the criminal justice system and social work professions to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based programmes and interventions.

The African Union would have liked to see the Declaration (resolution S-30/1, annex) of the special session on the world drug problem include a balanced and integrated approach to drug control pertaining to the roles in the criminal justice system, acknowledging the importance of a health-based approach and social intervention systems; that human rights and the health-based approaches had been emphasized; that drug control approaches had been harmonized and strengthened in different regions; and that the Declaration contained provisions to ensure that our people no longer need to die in pain or fear or helplessness in whatever form. We commit to increasing our pharmacovigilance to ensure that we are able to manage those who require or might be at risk of abusing drugs.

We acknowledge the challenges our continent has, but we remain committed, as a young continent, to strengthening our programmes. We will also facilitate consensus on the aspects relating to harm reduction and we must say that we are very honoured that all the factors that inform harm reduction are included in the outcome document. We, as States members of the African Union, will ensure that we find what works for our respective member States. As we commit to reaching zero new infections on our continent, we remain committed to ensuring that the challenges that Africa experiences are properly addressed and packaged in our Agenda 2063 document. That document is what informs us and gives us hope and comfort as Africans. It affirms, on behalf of the African Union, that each one of us is committed and that together we remain committed to doing everything in our power to create a drug-free continent to get to zero new HIV infections and to implement what works and acknowledge what does not work in our diversity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Nur Jazlan Mohamed, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia.

Mr. Mohamed (Malaysia): On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), I would like to congratulate the President of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. I am confident that under his able leadership this session will be a positive and fruitful one. ASEAN would also like to extend its appreciation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its dedication and its hard work on the important preparatory work for the special session.

I now seek your permission, Sir, to deliver a statement agreed upon by the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — which consists of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam — during the fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters, held in October 2015.

ASEAN is proud to have contributed constructively to the successful finalization of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of the special session on the world drug problem, which we recognize as an important milestone in the discussions for a new drug plan in 2019. We welcome the adoption of the outcome document to achieve the goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. We share the understanding that the recommendations set out in the outcome document will be undertaken with the aim of bolstering our national and regional efforts to achieve a drug-free society.

Despite our diverse drug situations, ASEAN remains united in its core commitment to a drug-free vision, so as to provide our people and communities with a society free from drug abuse and its ill effects. We are acutely aware of the disastrous effects of drugs, not just on the drug abuser and society at large, but also on national security and development.

ASEAN strongly supports the centrality of the three international drug-control conventions, which remain relevant and will continue to serve as the cornerstone of the world drug policy. Besides empowering a collective determination and response from all nations, the conventions also build on and tap the collective wisdom of all and provide a collective platform for us to discuss the emerging challenges on drug control. In the light of that, ASEAN stands firm against drugs, including being resolute against calls to legalize controlled drugs.

We also pledge equal support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its role as the principal policymaking organ of the United Nations for all drug-related policies and issues. ASEAN strongly supports the affirmation to that effect in the outcome document. While we work

collectively on such platforms, we also respect the sovereign right of each State to decide and implement policies that best cater to its individual needs, based on the unique circumstances and norms of its society. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing the drug issue, as each country has its own set of challenges. While some countries may choose to adopt certain approaches, depending on their own circumstances, those approaches should not be imposed on other countries, including those in ASEAN.

ASEAN is committed to suppressing and eliminating the scourge of drugs in order to achieve the vision of a drug-free ASEAN. Therefore, we have continued to intensify our efforts to implement a comprehensive, balanced and holistic approach to tackling drugs, while giving equal importance to both demand and supply-reduction efforts. This approach recognizes that a wide spectrum of factors may contribute to the drug problem, such as insufficient family support for individuals or a lack of enforcement effort to reduce supply. Therefore, upstream preventive measures, as well as downstream enforcement, intervention and rehabilitation measures, are necessary to address the drug problem. The overall objective of our efforts is to protect individuals and families from the dangers of drugs, wean abusers off their addiction and protect the security of our region.

ASEAN affirms that supply-reduction efforts continue to be an integral part of all its drug-control policies, and we have taken progressive steps to integrate our regional efforts. Within ASEAN we have created new platforms, such as an airport interdiction task force and a regional narcotics coordination centre, in order to enhance joint operations and investigations aimed at disrupting networks of regional drug syndicates. ASEAN is also fully committed to taking collaborative and cooperative operational measures with other regions to a higher level, as part of the global collaborative effort to address and mitigate the scourge of illicit drugs. We look forward to continuing our cooperation and partnership on the issue with United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

In conclusion, the ASEAN group expresses its best wishes and pledges its cooperation for the success of this special session.

I would now like to deliver a statement in my national capacity.

The convening this year of a special session of the General Assembly on drugs attests to our long-standing commitment to addressing the world drug problem. It is indeed an opportune time for Member States to engage in a transparent, inclusive and open-ended manner on reviewing the progress that has been made in achieving the goals established by the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. This special session will be an important marker for Member States in charting the directions and ways to follow in order to meet their commitments and targets under the Political Declaration and Plan of Action by 2019.

First, this session reaffirms our recognition of the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central policymaking organ of the United Nations on drug-related matters. We therefore pledge our full support to it as it discharges its duties and responsibilities.

Secondly, Malaysia strongly underscores its belief that the three existing international drug-control conventions and other relevant international instruments should be the basis for global drug policy and for dealing with the challenges of drug control in the twenty-first century.

Thirdly, Malaysia is committed to addressing the drug problem through a comprehensive and integrated approach that is balanced between reducing both demand and supply. Our measures include preventive education, the introduction of a system of voluntary treatment and rehabilitation known as the One Malaysia Cure and Care Clinic, reintegration, the utilization of integrated substance-control management systems and the establishment under the police of a special tactical intelligence narcotics group focused on investigating and arresting local and international drug kingpins and syndicates. We also recognize the challenges of implementing an evidence-based drug policy and related measures. In that regard, we pledge to enhance our cooperation with all stakeholders at both the regional and international levels in order to promote the sharing of knowledge, expertise and best practices on drug prevention and treatment.

Fourthly, Malaysia recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all measure for addressing the drug problem. In meeting our obligations under the drug-control treaties, we believe that it is the sovereign right of every Government and its citizens to decide

what is best for them, taking into account the unique circumstances and norms of their societies and in accordance with their national policies.

Finally, Malaysia fully recognizes that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed through effective and increased international cooperation. In that regard, we are always ready and committed to cooperating with any Member State or international organization.

Thanks to the collective spirit of ASEAN member States, our aspiration to achieving a drug-free ASEAN has been successfully translated into a list of action lines under ASEAN's political-security community blueprint for 2025, which was unanimously adopted by ASEAN's leaders in November. I am hopeful that this session will yield practical outcomes that can contribute positively to our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Sebahattin Öztürk, Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Öztürk (Turkey): I would like to start by saying how pleased I am to be attending this special session, which I consider a historic opportunity to solve the world's drug problem.

Today, illegal drugs and drug-related crime pose a significant problem in terms of individual and community health care, human rights and sustainable development targets. What is more, the production and trading of drugs have become extremely important sources of funding for terror organizations. Turkey has been drawing attention to the relationship between international terrorism and drug trafficking for a long time. It is one of the reasons that the drug problem is an open threat to international security and stability. In Turkey, we consider crimes related to the supply of drugs to be crimes against humanity and drug addiction to be a treatable disease. Within that framework, we carry on our fight against the production and trade of drugs based on the principle of zero tolerance.

We can achieve success in the fight against drugs, which have become a global threat, only through effective cooperation at the international level. With that in mind, over the past 10 years, Turkey has carried out 192 cooperative operational activities with 40 countries. We are also implementing profound legislative and administrative changes aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of the fight against drugs in our country. In order to coordinate that fight efficiently, we have established a commission in which several different public and civil-society organizations participate. In order to combat drug dealers effectively, we have also established special new law-enforcement units and increased the penalties for such crimes. Furthermore, while conducting those studies, we have not ignored the social aspects of the drug problem. Within the individual-family-community triangle we have conducted significant studies in the areas of awareness-raising and improving treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

We are aware of the burden of the responsibilities that the international drug-control conventions require of us. Before I conclude, I would like to underline that, with regard to this issue, we are open to any kind of cooperation and to sharing experiences. I hope that this meeting's outcomes will give us guidance in our future work.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Seiji Kihara, State Foreign Minister of Japan.

Mr. Kihara (Japan): I would like to express my sincere appreciation to President Lykketoft for convening this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, the first of its kind in 18 years. Japan actively participated in the discussions leading up to the special session. We very much look forward to constructive and open discussions during the session, as was the case during the preparatory process.

The world drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to international society and is of growing concern. I would like to raise three points that exacerbate the problem.

The first point is the global spread of the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine. The second point is the emergence of new psychoactive substances (NPS) as a new challenge. The third point is the increasing global instability caused by terrorism and the linkage between terrorism and organized crime, including drug trafficking.

Japan is especially concerned about the third point. Instability in the international environment facilitates the vicious cycle of terrorism and violent extremism. Countering the drug problem constitutes an integral part of the efforts towards stopping the vicious cycle

and creating societies resilient to violent extremism and terrorism.

Addressing the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility of the international community. With that understanding, I would like to highlight several of our countermeasures and international contributions.

Japan has supported the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) since its beginning, in 2008, while giving importance to the provision of technical assistance in countering synthetic drugs, including NPS and methamphetamine, in the South-East Asia region. Last February, Japan hosted the first regional seminar on NPS in the Central Asia region, in cooperation with UNODC, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre and the Government of Kazakhstan. During the seminar, our expert from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare shared our national expertise and experience. In addition, the National Police Agency of Japan has hosted the Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference every year since 1995, to facilitate an exchange of views and information on synthetic drugs and to enhance cooperation among national authorities. Furthermore, the Group of Seven (G-7), presided over this year by Japan, agreed to further strengthen its efforts on the issue of synthetic drugs, including NPS and methamphetamine.

This year, Japan has contributed a total of $18 million to UNODC, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, in order to tackle the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremism and to facilitate legislation and capacity-building on counter-terrorism in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Afghanistan and its surrounding countries. Japan also supports projects focused on risk-analysis on terrorism and organized crime, as well as counter-terrorist financing.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Japan's commitment to achieving the goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. We believe that the three international drug conventions remain the cornerstone of the international drug-control system. We deeply appreciate the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board and UNODC. Japan continues to support those bodies in fulfilling their important roles.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to deliver a statement on behalf of the group of Francophone countries, States members and observers of the International Organization of La Francophonie.

The international community is today at a decisive moment in assessing the effectiveness of national and international strategies regarding drugs. That is the reason that this special session on the world drug problem has been convened. We welcome the adoption of the then draft outcome document at Vienna, following the fifty-ninth session of the Narcotics Control Board in view of this special session on the drug problem. In that regard, we would like to congratulate all of the members of that Board for their efforts during the preparatory process that led to the finalization of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), as well as all of those that were involved in the entire process.

We stress that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that must be tackled multilaterally through greater, effective and focused international cooperation, in full accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sufficient resources must be mobilized to tackle the world drug problem. We call for greater technical assistance to developing countries in terms of the principle of common and shared responsibility.

At the same time, we stress that the three conventions on narcotics control and the other relevant international instruments comprise the cornerstone of the international drug-control regime. We welcome the efforts on the part of States parties to comply with the provisions and ensure the effective implementation of those instruments, including regarding the physical and moral health of humankind and to resolve individual and public health problems, societal problems and security issues that are due to the use of drugs and new psychoactive substances, particularly in the case of children and young people.

We note that there is a need to strengthen public health systems, especially when it comes to prevention, treatment, assistance and rehabilitation. That should be done through a comprehensive and balanced approach that includes initiatives and measures based on scientific data, with a view to minimizing the negative impact of drug abuse on public health and society. In that regard, we are committed to promoting the well-being of society as a whole by developing effective strategies based on, and adapted to, the needs of individuals, families and communities. They must form an integral part of comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory national policies.

We are disturbed by the fact that about 80 per cent of the world population has little or no access to controlled medications to treat moderate or severe pain. We therefore call upon the international community to ensure the appropriate availability of such substances under international control, including opiates for medical and scientific purposes. We must also ensure their non-diversion to illicit trafficking networks, while ensuring compliance with international conventions. As an urgent matter, we must eliminate the various obstacles to the import, distribution and use of pain medication. We must respond to the serious problems of the ever-growing links among drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including, in some cases, terrorism and its financing.

We must also pursue the efforts under way to prevent experimentation and regular use of substances under international control. It has been scientifically proved that the consumption of such substances exposes children and young people to possible brain damage and psychological damage and increases the risk of dependency. We have a special responsibility to young people. It is the responsibility of the State and of professionals who work with children and young people. It is also the responsibility of families and all of those who can help young people make the right choices as they move through life.

The States members of our group will ensure that young people have the tools necessary for active participation in decision-making processes that affect them, including the development of policies and programmes aimed at avoiding their exposure to drug addiction, HIV/AIDS and other health consequences of drug abuse.

The effective prevention of addiction entails the establishment of a balanced global policy that combines prevention, early intervention, care, effective rule of law and combating trafficking. It is crucial that prevention strategies take into account recent discoveries about the risks associated with the consumption of psychoactive substances. Such a scientific approach to prevention is based on research and analysis and recommendations by experts that should guide States in choosing which prevention programmes to fund. In that context, prevention programmes based on the psychosocial needs of young people and their parents are crucial. That means that there needs to be a global approach to prevention and education that prioritizes health issues, leading to the mobilization of all of those with competencies in those areas.

With regard to education, the aim should be to adapt prevention measures to different ages and to opt for progressive and long-term prevention that also involves parents. To that end, we must promote initial and ongoing training, with stronger synergies among various relevant professions, training and prevention of addiction, for all teachers involved with young people, including strengthening common approaches among all stakeholders, including judges, police, social workers, teachers, health-care workers and other professionals.

In addition, we are committed to making the utmost effort in order to prevent and combat the production, manufacture and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances, including addressing the causes and consequences of crime and violence related to drugs. In that context, we must strengthen programmes on reducing supply and demand. Preventive measures are also necessary to deal with the socioeconomic factors that could encourage transnational organized crime related to drugs. We also call for improving regional, subregional and international cooperation on penal matters, especially with regard to judicial cooperation in areas such as extradition, including providing targeted technical assistance, while at the same time fully respecting and promoting human rights.

In another area, we express our concern about the appearance of new psychoactive substances (NPS), which have a negative effect on health, as well as the growing threat posed by such substances as methamphetamines. We underscore that it is crucial to adopt effective responses based on scientific data to deal with the issue of NPS, in particular their negative impact on health and on societies.

In order to better address the world drug problem, it has become necessary to tackle socioeconomic problems related to the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs by implementing global anti-drug policies and programmes over the long-term that are focused on sustainable development, especially alternative development projects. In that regard, we must consider adopting a sharper focus on development as part of our national policies and programmes on drugs in order to address risk factors that have an impact on individuals, communities and societies. We therefore call on all stakeholders to provide greater support, including via flexible financing in the long term, for the establishment of global anti-drug programmes that are balanced and centred around sustainable development and improving health and economic solutions, including basing those on real needs and national priorities.

In conclusion, the group of Francophone countries that are members and observers of the International Organization of La Francophonie remain determined to take the necessary steps to follow up on the recommendations and conclusions of this special session, in close partnership with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and civil-society entities, and to ensure that information on the progress made in implementing the recommendations is made public and thoroughly analysed by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the lead body of the United Nations responsible for matters related to drug control.

With your permission, Sir, I shall now make a statement on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco.

This special session is indeed timely. It is taking place at a decisive moment for the international community, which must face up to significant challenges due to the worrying increase in the production, trafficking and consumption of all kinds of drugs. The session is taking place as well at a time when new psychoactive substances are appearing, along with new modes of consumption that are being widely disseminated on the Internet; hence the need to adopt national and international strategies to address such challenges. Member States and all stakeholders are called upon to make every possible effort to ensure the success of this special session. This session must also lead to specific answers and an operational road map to meet our common concerns. The road map must include an evaluation mechanism to assess the progress made and the obstacles encountered, with a view to strengthening national policies and international cooperation in the fight against drugs.

Despite different approaches to the fight against the world drug problem, and above and beyond the broad range of socio-cultural differences that have to be taken into account, the international community shares one common goal, namely, to protect our societies and our States against the negative, destructive and often irreversible effects of the scourge of drugs. In that regard, my delegation stresses the importance of extreme caution in addressing the matter of the decriminalization and legalization of drugs. An abrupt change from general prohibition to general legalization in such a sensitive area could be counterproductive and backfire, thereby jeopardizing the national public policies that make up the global anti-drug strategy.

Because of its geographical location, the Kingdom of Morocco is constantly confronted by the drug-trafficking scourge, which has been exacerbated in recent years by the interconnectedness in the activities of transnational criminal organizations. Such groups use Africa as a main transit platform and exploit the terrorist networks and rebel movements in the region, thereby threatening peace and stability in a large part of the Sahelo-Saharan region. To cope with such challenges, the Moroccan authorities are making considerable sacrifices in terms of human and other resources in the fight against criminal networks engaging in smuggling and trafficking of all kinds. The goal is also to ensure the monitoring and control of the borders and coasts of the Kingdom.

In that context, the Kingdom of Morocco wishes to draw attention to the deteriorating security situation in the Sahelo-Sahara region. That grave situation calls for strengthened regional cooperation. Such cooperation is more necessary than ever, especially in the areas of judicial assistance, extradition and information-sharing, in order to neutralize and cut off the drug-trafficking networks that are now using increasingly sophisticated and innovative methods, including light aircraft, helicopters and high-speed boats.

Morocco continues to be committed to relentlessly combating the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs and drug addiction. To that end, the Kingdom of Morocco has adopted a comprehensive and balanced strategy based on a three-pronged approach, namely, prevention, care and the fight against trafficking and trafficking networks. Existing public policies are

aimed at preventing, as early as possible, addictive behaviour and targeting both supply and demand for illicit drugs of all kinds. We have in place a long-term vision focused on the following measures.

First, there is a focus on the gradual eradication of illicit drug crops. Secondly, we are carrying out a prevention and awareness-raising programme on addiction aimed at helping drug users, which is periodically adjusted to the needs of the population concerned. Thirdly, we are providing health care for drug users and treatment for drug addicts and ensuring rehabilitation and social reintegration. Fourthly, alternative development programmes and sustainable socioeconomic projects and structures are being put in place in areas affected by illicit crop production. And, fifthly, we are boosting regional and international cooperation to maximize the effectiveness of the process to combat drug-trafficking networks.

The efforts deployed have been recognized by the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The actions undertaken and the considerable material, human and financial means mobilized within the framework of our strategy have enabled us to reduce the areas cultivated with cannabis by 65 per cent since 2003.

Thanks to the work of the UNODC and the Narcotics Control Board, the global anti-drug policy has achieved significant and encouraging results. However, the available data and statistics indicate that drug production, consumption and trafficking in all categories of drugs has been increasing.

In conclusion, the situation requires that Member States pool their efforts to strengthen national public policies and inter-State cooperation in the spirit and letter of the three international drug-control conventions, which remain the cornerstone of the fight against the global drug problem. We must adapt our national and international anti-drug strategies and policies as necessary to effectively combat the world drug problem. That is the real goal and purpose of this session. We wish the Assembly every success.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of the Sudan.

Mr. Zarog (Sudan): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

At the outset, I would also like to extend our warm congratulations to the President of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. Our Group looks forward to a successful special session under his leadership. The Group also takes this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for its efficient support throughout the whole process leading to the convening of this special session.

The Group of African States welcomes the adoption of the then draft outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna last month. We welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1 earlier in this session.

While appreciating the progress made at the international, regional and national levels in countering the world drug problem, the African Group underscores that the problem remains a major challenge for the international community, which requires effective and increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation, as well as enhanced technical and financial assistance on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility. In that context, the Group reaffirms its commitment to the effective implementation of the three existing international drug-control conventions, which constitute the cornerstone of the international drug-control system, and underline the importance of achieving the targets, provisions and goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. In addition, the Group reaffirms its commitment to the joint ministerial statement adopted in 2014.

The Group reaffirms that the 2016 special session on the world drug problem provides an opportunity for Member States to review the progress made in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the frameworks of the three international drug-control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

The African Group recognizes the leading role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters, as reaffirmed in

resolution 70/181. Furthermore, we express our support and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, in particular those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem.

The Group welcomes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), and is fully confident that efforts to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively counter the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Group underscores the importance of the African Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for the period 2013 to 2017 as a blueprint for Africa to address the challenges posed by illicit drugs. We believe that complementary efforts by the international community will further enhance the achievement of the objectives set out in the Plan, as well as the achievement of a drug-free continent within the framework of the aspirational goal 4 of Agenda 2063 — a peaceful and secure Africa.

Furthermore, the Group welcomes the twenty-fifth meeting of the heads of national drug law enforcement agencies in Africa, held in Algeria in September 2015, and looks forward to the implementation of its recommendations with the purpose of strengthening regional cooperation to effectively counter the world drug problem.

The African Group continues to express its concern about the global scourge of the abuse of illicit drugs. The abuse of drugs continues to undermine the efforts of all countries of the continent to deepen socioeconomic development and other efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development. The Group recognizes the efforts made by African countries in preventing, eliminating and reducing, significantly and measurably, the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Despite those efforts, the illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of controlled substances — which are cannabis, cocaine and heroin — as well as uncontrolled substances, such as ketamine, methamphetamine, nyaope and tramadol, remain a huge challenge across Africa, which requires enhanced international and regional cooperation, including technical assistance, based on the needs of the requesting countries.

The Group stresses that effective drug policies are those that achieve a balanced and integrated approach towards supply reduction, demand reduction and international cooperation, as outlined in the three international drug-control conventions and the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, in order to achieve a society free of drug abuse. The Group calls upon Member States to continue to address drug abuse as a health and social issue, while upholding the law and its enforcement. Moreover, the African Group stresses the importance of better coordination between law-enforcement agencies at the national, regional and international levels to effectively counter all aspects of the world drug problem, including their consequences for the safety of individuals, communities and society as a whole.

The Group reiterates its concern regarding health problems associated with the abuse of drugs and reaffirms its commitment to working towards the improvement of access to health programmes for the prevention of drug abuse, including awareness-raising, treatment and rehabilitation. The Group reiterates its concern over the unavailability and unaffordability and lack of access to pain-relieving drugs for the millions of people on the African continent who need them the most. We call for ensuring the adequate availability and affordability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, trafficking and abuse. In that regard, the Group calls for increased technical assistance and international cooperation that allow the transfer of know-how in manufacturing generic pharmaceutical preparations that are bioequivalent and cost-effective.

Furthermore, the African Group stresses the urgent need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing links connecting drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime — including human trafficking, the traffic in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism and money-laundering, including in connection with the financing of terrorism — and to the significant challenges faced by law enforcement and judicial authorities in responding to the ever-changing means used by transnational criminal organizations to avoid detection and prosecution.

The Group welcomes the efforts made by several Member States to develop combined public education, law-enforcement and health initiatives to address the rise in the consumption of drugs, and expresses concern over the legalization and decriminalization of certain

drugs in some regions of the world. It is the view of the African Group that such misguided policies will hinder ongoing efforts to combat the illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, traffic in, consumption and abuse of drugs, to which Member States have committed themselves in the global fight against the world drug problem.

The Group should like to reiterate the high importance it attaches to integral and sustainable alternative development and preventive alternative development as, inter alia, a means to curb the world drug problem. In that respect, the Group would like to encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to use its advocacy role to encourage both multilateral development agencies as well as bilateral donors to give special attention to alternative development in the programmes and projects related to counter drug problems, and calls for adequate assistance in promoting, developing or reviewing sustainable alternative development initiatives.

In conclusion, let me assure the Assembly once again of the full support of the African Group during this special session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Ilioski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia. Although my country aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1), I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The Republic of Macedonia welcomes this opportunity to address this much-needed and timely debate on the world drug issue. I am confident that this discussion will contribute further to our efforts to better cope with such a phenomenon. Aware that the world drug problem can have a destabilizing effect on the socioeconomic development of our wider region, my Government is undertaking comprehensive measures for drug demand and drug supply reduction. The Government undertakes prevention, treatment and harm-reduction activities, as well as tangible measures in preventing and suppressing drug trafficking and any other form of illicit trafficking. Clear indications of the reduction in drug supply activities are the numerous seizures of bulky narcotic shipments, resulting in cutting transboundary channels. In addition, we maintain close contacts and actively cooperate with our partners from the region and beyond.

Unfortunately, the Balkan route remains one of the main trafficking pathways for illicit drugs to European markets. Especially now, with the ongoing migration crisis, that route has become more attractive to drug traffickers. Therefore, it is of the utmost and particular importance to ensure close cooperation between the region of South-East Europe and those countries of origin and final destination on that route. I recall that today's rapid pace of globalization, aside from its evident benefits, also brings many ills, triggering harmful repercussions. In that context, the Balkan route is not only negatively affecting the region, but also adds to the drug abuse beyond it.

Today, the world continues to be confronted by many challenges to which only the unified and concerted efforts of all of us can bring results. The illicit drug trade is certainly one of these. I am confident that we have a mechanism to address it effectively, including by cutting its links to financing terrorism. In that regard, this special session should be seen as an opportunity not only to address the challenges of global drug policy, but to improve and strengthen international cooperation. Countering the world drug problem is imperative to achieving sustainable development in every region.

In conclusion, I would like to assure representatives and partners that the Republic of Macedonia remains committed to continue to cooperate closely with all relevant actors to better cope with the international drug problem. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of the Niger.

Mrs. Djibo (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow my delegation to congratulate you, Sir, for convening this meeting, which provides States with an opportunity to discuss their experiences in the fight against drugs and to strengthen the means for a more effective fight.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States.

My country, the Niger, does not produce drugs; however, due to its pivotal geographical location

between sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, the Niger has become a crossroads coveted by drug traffickers, with the resultant climate of insecurity. That is why it is necessary to strengthen regional and international cooperation in the framework of this struggle, which includes cannabis, cocaine and psychotropic substances.

It is both sad and a pity that young people, who represent the future, are the main victims of the drug trade, both as consumers and sellers. To combat drug trafficking, in 1992 the Government established a national commission to coordinate the fight against drugs, in addition to the existing frameworks of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and United Nations. The objectives of the commission are to identify the needs and problems in the fight against drugs at the national level; define a strategy in the framework of public policies on health and repression; monitor and coordinate the implementation of the strategy and national programme against trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; undertake an intensive campaign to inform, educate and raise the awareness of the public with a view to reducing the demand, supply and trafficking of drugs; and develop reliable statistics on drug trafficking and use. The commission, with the support of civil society, also takes advantage of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, celebrated every year on 26 June, to conduct an awareness-raising campaign against this scourge.

Among the actions taken by the commission, we can highlight the prohibition of the unrestricted sale of all pharmaceutical products that can be used as drugs, such as Tramadol. In addition to the commission, the Government has adopted a national youth policy that aims to promote training, entrepreneurship and other activities to empower young people.

In 2012, 1,250 people were arrested, including 1,172 Nigériens, 892 of whom were young people aged 18 to 29. Those figures concern both the sale and consumption of drugs. Faced with this situation, my country is committed, through the commission, to take urgent measures to prevent and prohibit not only the consumption but also the sale of all illegal substances that threaten the health, and even the lives, of our people, in particular young people.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Lebanese Republic.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): Lebanon welcomes the convening of this special session on the world drug problem, and I would like at the outset to express our appreciation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its essential role, as well as our appreciation for the comprehensive and inclusive process leading to this meeting. This special session comes at an important juncture — after the adoption in September 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, and also to promote democracy, good governance and the rule of law while, most importantly, leaving no one behind.

The world drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the achievement of sustainable development, peace and security worldwide. Over the years, notable progress has been achieved in countering the world drug problem, mainly with regard to improved understanding of the problem and the elaboration and implementation of national, regional and international strategies to counter it. Nevertheless, new challenges have emerged, posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in humans and in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

All these prior and new challenges should be taken into account. They require an urgent response in our collective efforts to fully implement the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, as well as the joint ministerial statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, in conformity with the three international drug-control conventions and other relevant and applicable rules of international law.

Additional attention should be given to the specific needs of women, children and youth, and an increased role of civil society is essential to achieving healthy lives and well-being for all, as pledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, it is important to promote international cooperation to enhance affordable access to controlled drugs for medical purposes, particularly in developing countries,

and cooperation at the scientific and academic levels in this regard, while ensuring to prevent their diversion into illicit channels.

Lebanon, based on its commitment to the international drug-control conventions and relevant international human rights law, adopted in 1998 Law No. 673, which establishes a comprehensive legal framework in the approach to countering the drug problem. A national council related to the Council of Ministers is in charge of elaborating a national strategy and promoting international cooperation with regard to the world drug problem and relevant judicial cooperation. Moreover, the law gives drug users, under the supervision of a committee on addiction, the right to choose a State-sponsored treatment programme over incarceration which, if completed, entitles them to have the charges against them dropped.

In conclusion, it is needless to recall that armed conflicts and their consequences on youth, as well as the rise of extremism across the globe, especially in our part of the world, are additional challenges that require our collective efforts to achieve a world free of drugs and related crimes.

We look forward to substantive discussions during the round tables and a positive and fruitful outcome of this special session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Cabo Verde.

Mr. Ferreira (Cabo Verde): At the outset, I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to President Mogens Lykketoft for convening this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, providing us with an occasion to assess the achievements made since the last special session.

Cabo Verde aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States.

The 2016 special session is taking place after the adoption of the landmark 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). There is no doubt that transforming our world in a sustainable manner requires international efforts to address the world drug problem. This is paramount for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and for the promotion of healthy lives and well-being for all. It is our view that countering the world drug problem must be based on a human rights perspective in order to ensure human dignity and guarantee access to treatment, without discrimination. We join other delegations who expressed their deep regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty.

In its effort to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, Cabo Verde, besides having endorsed the international legal instruments on narcotic drugs, has reinforced its legal framework and adopted sound policies and ambitious comprehensive strategic plans aimed at addressing and countering not only the drug problem, but also money laundering and other related organized crime. Furthermore, our national efforts have been complemented by regional initiatives and actions to combat drug trafficking under the Praia Political Declaration of 1997 for the Coordination of Drug Control Activities and Plan of Action, in close partnership with members of the Economic Community of West African States.

Being a small island developing State located at the crossroads of the transatlantic illicit narcotics trade, with scarce resources and limited means of implementation, Cabo Verde faces many challenges related to the control and surveillance of its maritime zone in preventing drug trafficking and abuse. We welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", and we deem it critical that its implementation be based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. To that end, it is important to strengthen cooperation at the national, regional and international levels, and to involve all relevant stakeholders. We take due note of the operational recommendations on international cooperation, as well as for interregional cooperation in order to address social issues and to improve technical and financial cooperation for balanced development-oriented drug policies.

Finally, we request the assistance of the relevant United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in implementing our prevention measures and mechanisms in order to better address and effectively counter the drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Richard Nduhuura, Head of the delegation of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President for organizing this special session on the world drug problem in order for Member States and relevant stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences of the drug problem in our global society.

Uganda reaffirms that countering the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility that must be addressed in a multilateral setting. It is a problem that requires an integrated and balanced approach, which must be carried out in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, other provisions of international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Uganda further reaffirms the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, the Common African Position on narcotics and psychotropic medicines, the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and the ongoing harmonization process of the East African Community member States on drug use and control.

Uganda has made advances in the areas of drug control and access to drugs for medical and scientific use. That includes revising legislation in order to strengthen measures to control drug use and trafficking, as well as the sentencing regime, in accordance with international laws and standards. Further legislative changes have been made to allow appropriately trained nurses and clinical officers to prescribe certain narcotic medicines for pain control, and we have successfully implemented a public-private partnership between Government and civil-society organizations to produce and distribute certain narcotic medicines to patients with moderate-to-severe pain, at no charge.

Uganda still faces challenges. First, the consumption of opioids for medical and scientific use is still below the African and global mean. Secondly, there is inadequate coordination and collaboration among the various ministries, departments and agencies involved in drug control, medical and scientific use. Thirdly, we lack the capacity necessary to address increased trafficking through Uganda, in particular financial, technological and human resources for the porous borders. In the light of the foregoing, the Government of the Republic of Uganda has singled out narcotic drugs trafficking as a major problem that threatens its national security and social welfare. It acknowledges the serious threats and dangers posed by drugs, including money laundering, transnational organized crime and public health issues.

The Government remains committed to complying with the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. That notwithstanding, Uganda recognizes the principle of dual balance in the implementation of laws on the illicit use of narcotics as well as in making them available for medical and scientific use.

In conclusion, Uganda realizes the need to consider the affordability, quality and availability of narcotic medicines for medical and scientific use. At the same time, while tackling the drug problem, Uganda will ensure that it complies with standards set by the relevant international legal instruments.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to warmly thank the President of the General Assembly, the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and all those who prepared this special session on the world drug problem for their ongoing efforts and the excellent preparation of this historic session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to all those who helped to make our discussions and negotiations on the final document (resolution S-30/1, annex) a success. That document conveys the awareness of the international community of the world drug problem, and of the fact that the problem is related and intrinsic to organized crime, terrorism and money-laundering, which are vehicles to finance terrorism. The document also allays our concerns with regard to strengthening the means to address this phenomenon.

In that context, we welcome the international intention conveyed through the final document to strengthen international cooperation and to work together in keeping with the principle of shared responsibility. That includes intensifying national efforts to address the drug problem — including its social and economic consequences — through a

comprehensive approach that respects all human rights and preserves the well-being of societies.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States. I would also like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Tunisia has always made a point of participating in all the regional and international meetings dealing with the problem under discussion in order to share experiences and information, improve practical cooperation and strengthen the relevant international conventions. We in Tunisia are working with non-governmental organizations to effectively tackle this issue, which has so many repercussions for young people, and thereby following the lead of the international community.

In order to strengthen our national efforts in that regard, and in line with international initiatives, using contributions from both the Government and civil society we have established a commission designed to prepare and submit a draft bill to Parliament dealing with all types of drugs. That is because our current law, despite its severity, has failed to curb the growing incidence of drug abuse, and punitive treatment has not produced the hoped-for results. Such drug abuse often destroys the lives of young addicts. The draft law on drugs and narcotics is important legislation, because it distinguishes between those who consume drugs and those who sell them and it addresses crimes related to drug trafficking, such as terrorism, and their impact on the socioeconomic front. Prevention has therefore become a priority over punishment, with the introduction of alternative measures for addicts, in accordance with principles that emphasize rehabilitation and treatment and the right of addicts to have access to them.

Also on the basis of the new bill, under Government auspices we will establish a national centre for drug and narcotics studies aimed at encouraging study of the problem and launching campaigns against drug abuse. Similarly, we will create a national commission on the drug problem that will provide addicts with treatment and rehabilitation in private and public clinics.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm Tunisia's determination to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the relevant international conventions, in close cooperation with United Nations agencies, including the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the principal international policymaking entity on drug control, in accordance with the three international drug-control conventions and based on the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm the importance of international and regional cooperation in dealing with this issue, based on radical solutions to be implemented nationally in a comprehensive approach on the economic, social and education fronts, by strengthening the efforts of every sector of the international community, including civil society. **The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Alzahrani (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my appreciation for the convening of this important meeting of the General Assembly. I am grateful to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its secretariat, and to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for their work in preparing for this thirtieth special session on the world drug problem, which is one of the most significant challenges facing the international community today.

I would like to begin by affirming the commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to all the international drug-control conventions. We wish the special session every success and hope that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) we have adopted by consensus will contribute to ending the drug problem. I would like to thank all the speakers who have preceded me for their valuable suggestions regarding a scourge inflicted on the world that requires us all to shoulder our responsibilities for protecting our societies. As officials in charge of drug control, we must make every effort to provide that protection by operationalizing the shared cooperation and coordination mechanisms among our States.

The developments around this issue and the advances that have been made internationally in the area of drug control in recent years have led to increasing concern in various societies regarding the serious risks the issue poses and their repercussions for society. The changed approach to the issue advocates working collectively to deal with the problem by reducing the illegitimate supply of drugs and the demand for them as much as possible. We firmly believe that the problem of drugs and the threat they pose are global, and therefore that their consequences for society and individuals are too. Putting an end to the problem therefore requires

enhancing international cooperation. It is vital that we seek solutions to the drug problem on the basis of the relevant international conventions, in ways that are compatible with each State's national legislation and without interfering in their internal affairs.

With regard to cooperation at the regional and international levels and the importance of an approach that curbs trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, Saudi Arabia has focused on promoting cooperation with the relevant entities, exchanging information and implementing joint operations aimed at reducing trafficking in drugs and narcotics in ways that enhance the principles of international cooperation. We stress the importance of cooperation among States with a view to succeeding in countering the illicit trade in drugs and psychotropic substances.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also focused on providing treatment for drug addicts, who should be seen as suffering from an illness and not stigmatized. They deserve treatment and care that will enable them to be rehabilitated as active members of their societies. We have therefore established 10 specialized health-care institutions for treating addicts and providing them with psychiatric care and rehabilitation services. The private sector has also contributed by establishing three treatment hospitals. On the prevention side, we have launched a national project for providing preventive services with eight umbrella programmes designed to protect every sector of society.

With regard to crimes involving money-laundering, in 2003 Saudi Arabia enacted a system that criminalized money-laundering related to the illicit trafficking of drugs in all its forms. The Government is also cognizant of the importance of controlling chemical precursors and substances to ensure that they are not used for illegal purposes and is working seriously to develop a system and measures controlling the import, export, production and distribution of every type of chemical substances, including precursors.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with resolution 66/109, of 9 December 2011, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, Secretary General of the Union of South American Nations.

Mr. Samper Pizano (Union of South American Nations) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 countries that make up the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). There are 430 million people in those countries, which cover some 17 million square kilometres.

Almost 20 years ago, in 1998 (2011), when I was President of Colombia, I stood on this very rostrum (see A/S-20/PV.2) to address the Assembly as it met to discuss the evolution of what was then already a serious drug problem. At the time, all we asked of the producing countries was that they understand that the responsibility for combating the drug problem was not exclusively for those on the supply side and that those countries that were consumers also had to take on their share of that responsibility. That was when we witnessed the emergence of the concept of shared responsibility. And here I am today, once again given the honour of attending another special session of the Assembly considering the same problem. While it is still just as serious, I think that where it now differs is that this time there are some more positive aspects that I would like to highlight.

First, the dialogue between the countries involved in the fight against drugs is much more sincere. Secondly, we have come to understand that this process must involve concerted action. There is no point in some countries fighting others when we all believe the same thing — that we must end the drug problem and that we all have different notions of the best way to do that. Thirdly, an element that I would like to emphasize is that there is agreement on the need for selectivity in policies combating drugs. The formulation of the three conventions that constitute a fundamental part of the fight against drugs permits some flexibility and selectivity to be applied, ensuring a number of things, including the effective implementation of those instruments.

That is why UNASUR has agreed on three basic premises. The first is that the drug issue cannot be treated separately from the issue of human rights. However vital drug-control agreements are, it is just as essential to realize that ensuring respect for human rights is as important as formulating such agreements. The second premise, which follows from the first, is that the most important human rights issue in this regard is that of public health. The drug problem is not a security problem; it is fundamentally a public health problem. That is how it came about, and that is how it should remain, based on objective criteria. Drugs are not bad because they are prohibited; they are bad because they are injurious to public health. That very basic reasoning has enabled us to better formulate

our drug policies. The third premise in our consensus is the importance of holding a more tolerant position vis-a-vis the weak links in the drug chain in order to protect consumers, distinguish between different types of consumption and ensure that our indigenous peoples may continue their traditional consumption of coca, as well as distinguishing between small-time dealers and drug traffickers.

None of those distinctions is incompatible with taking a firmer position on organized crime and drug trafficking in all its manifestations. Stigmatizing those who believe we should introduce flexibility is unacceptable. It is important to be flexible in implementing policies in the sectors we want to protect, and that is just as important as it is to take a firm stance against criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking. The document that UNASUR has prepared for submission to the General Assembly, based on our consensus, is focused on outlining the criteria for a more productive dialogue, which is why some of its most important proposals request that the Secretary-General of the United Nations establish an inter-institutional commission that can bring together the International Narcotics Control Board, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and other bodies working for compliance with standards in the areas of health, education and culture that are linked to the drug issue.

Naturally, we would have liked the document to include some of the issues that are part of our concerns and consensus, such as ending capital punishment, which is doing a great deal of damage in some Asian and South American countries. If that is not possible, we can perhaps work on treaties whereby, based on legal cooperation agreements, it would be possible to ensure at least that Latin Americans who are in difficult situations could be repatriated in order to serve their sentences at home. Similarly, we would like to see a policy that makes a stronger distinction between consumption and small-scale drug-dealing so that we are not punishing consumers. We would also like to see the word "democracy" included in the document. It is around all of these distinctions — as to what democracy is or is not, or what human rights are or are not — that we must start to hold a dialogue enabling us to arrive at agreement and move forward with a policy for combating drugs.

I should reiterate that I am optimistic, based on the efforts that have been made to open new spaces for dialogue, introduce new concepts, to be selective in our approach and understand that we should take a gradual approach rather than a confrontational one. That is the path of the future. Most importantly, we need to continue working together under the protective umbrella of the United Nations if we hope to emerge from this war in which we are all involved.

In conclusion, Colombia is defining peace agreements that will put an end to 50 years of armed conflict. In recent years, that conflict has been financed by drug money. It was drug money that caused the 280,000 casualties of the recent armed violence. That is why, for our countries that convened the conference — Colombia, Mexico and Guatemala — and all of the countries of Central and South America, the drug problem is not an issue just of public health, but of public safety and the very survival of our rule of law.

I urge participants to consider this once they have returned home. What will happen to those Central American countries for which the drug problem is the difference between their survival or extinction as States and as democracies? In the light of that reflection, I conclude my delivery of this consensus statement by affirming that, through Venezuela's pro tempore presidency after Uruguay, we will pursue a solution to our regional problem of drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind them that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sargsyan (Armenia): My delegation requested the floor to exercise its right of reply to the comments made by the representative of Azerbaijan. We regret to see that abusing its membership, hijacking agenda items, disseminating disinformation, distorting the facts and simply spreading lies against my country have become the working habit of the Azerbaijani delegation and its representatives.

My delegation had no intention of speaking in exercise of its right of reply, but unfortunately we are compelled to do so. All allegations against my nation are strongly rejected. Instead of watching a showcase of Azerbaijan's bankrupt State propaganda, I think

that this respected body would be more interested in learning about the real situation on the ground involving increasing drug production and substance abuse and the transit of narcotic drugs in Azerbaijan, as well as the most recent military aggression by Azerbaijan against the peace-loving people of Nagorno Karabakh.

Claims and accusations, including accusations made by Azerbaijan against Armenia of violating relevant Security Council resolutions, are simply baseless and fabricated. We advise the members of the delegation concerned to carefully read the resolutions, if they have not so done in the past two decades, to see if they can find a single word or sentence about aggression or occupation on the part of the Republic of Armenia.

It is the exact opposite. It is Azerbaijan that repeatedly violates a number of provisions of Security Council resolutions, particularly by rejecting the proposals of mediators, including calls for the establishment of confidence-building measures between conflicting parties, such as the creation of investigative mechanisms to prevent ceasefire violations and the withdrawal of snipers from the line of conflict. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh have accepted the measures proposed by the mediators. In that regard, I refer to recent statements made by the mediators that acknowledge that Armenia has accepted the proposals and call on Azerbaijan to do the same.

The recent large-scale offensive, using heavy weaponry and artillery, makes it unambiguously clear to the international community why Azerbaijan has been rejecting the creation of such a mechanism. The references to Nagorno Karabakh and the surrounding territories as uncontrolled do not correspond to reality. Unlike in Azerbaijan, the democratically elected authorities of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic have full and effective control over their territories. The fact that the Nagorno Karabakh Republic is not yet recognized does not mean that it is uncontrolled territory where all kinds of illegal activities are taking place. Moreover, since 1992, Azerbaijan has kept Nagorno Karabakh under blockade, and the line of contact defined by the ceasefire of 1994 is under the tight military control of the Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces, which eliminates any possibility of such transit.

With regard to accusations and allegations that Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh serve as a corridor for the transportation of drugs to markets through so-called occupied territories, all major international studies and reports indicate the opposite — namely, that it is Azerbaijan that continues to serve as an increasingly favoured transit country and the major regional transit route for drug trafficking to Russia and Europe. For more detailed information, those interested may refer to such documents as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *World Drug Report 2015* and the United States Department of State's *2015 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*. Furthermore, Azerbaijan's corrupt Government officials are involved in organizing the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs by covering up and sponsoring the organized crime engaged in those activities.

The deliberate violent attacks against the people of Nagorno Karabakh by Azerbaijan's armed forces early this month, which were accompanied by the executions of Nagorno Karabakh civilians and servicemen — carried out in the style of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), including the mutilation of bodies and parading with severed heads — are blatant examples of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Accounts show that Azerbaijani military personnel who have committed those crimes had been exposed to substance abuse before the attack.

Against the backdrop of the recent hostilities against Nagorno Karabakh, it is unacceptable to allow Azerbaijan to continue on its current path of violence and aggression. Immediate action must be taken to renounce violence, ensure accountability and commit to implementing proposals that will promote peace. We sincerely hope that the international community and the United Nations will hold the leadership of Azerbaijan and the perpetrators of those crimes against humanity accountable and bring them to justice, thereby contributing to peace.

In the interests of time and in respect of the work of this body, I will stop here by calling upon the delegation concerned to cease the practice of showcasing its bankrupt State propaganda and side-tracking discussions on important global problems, and instead to commit to peace and dialogue.

Mr. Rafiyev (Azerbaijan): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in response to the misstatement delivered by the delegation of the Republic of Armenia, which was full of falsified accusations against my country.

This special session aims to provide Member States, among others, with an opportunity to share their concerns about drug-related challenges observed within their internationally recognized territories and to seek effective regional and international responses to address them. The statement made by the Head of the delegation of Azerbaijan fully conforms to that context.

As confirmed by the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Doha Declaration — which was adopted at the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice by consensus among Member States, including the Armenian delegation — conflict and post-conflict situations provide particularly vulnerable conditions conducive to the occurrence and growth of various kinds of criminal activities, including those of a transnational nature.

The ongoing armed conflict in and around the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan has resulted in the occupation of almost one-fifth of its territory by the Republic of Armenia and has made approximately one out of every nine persons an internally displaced person. As a result of the occupation, a subordinate separatist entity was established and is now effectively controlled by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. It should be emphasized that various criminal activities committed in the occupied territories, including the cultivation, production and trafficking of drugs, clearly testify to the intention of the Republic of Armenia to convert those territories into a safe haven for criminals during the past the 24 years. The financial resources acquired as a result of those criminal activities are mostly used to consolidate the occupation and to finance various organized criminal activities. Azerbaijan has repeatedly brought to the attention of the international community the presence of Armenian armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, which is a major impediment to the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Because we have heard false accusations concerning my delegation and my country in yet another attempt by the Armenian side to mislead the international community with regard to events that have recently taken place along the line of contact between the Azerbaijan and Armenian armed forces, I would like to briefly provide some information on those events of early April.

Since the early morning of 2 April, Armenia has intensified its military activity in the area of conflict, which have been accompanied by numerous violations of international humanitarian law, tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Armenia has been conducting systematic, deliberate and targeted attacks against non-combatant civilian populations — encompassing, inter alia, women, children and the elderly — residing in the densely populated areas adjacent to the line of contact between the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Armenia. As a result of the bombardment of 32 settlements, six civilians, including two children under the age of 16, were killed and 26 seriously wounded. Without the timely use of effective civil-defence measures, the number of casualties among the population would have been significantly higher. Substantial damage was also inflicted upon private and public property, including critical civilian infrastructure.

Armenia's actions represent a grave violation of international humanitarian law, in particular the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols thereto, as well as the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Azerbaijan has taken only appropriate measures to counter Armenia's use of force against its territorial integrity and sovereignty and to ensure the safety of the civilian population and property within its internationally recognized borders.

I would also like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that out of 92 military personnel officially declared by the Armenian side as having been killed in the recent clash, more than 80 per cent were serving in the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, as reported by the Armenian Ministry of Defence. That is yet further proof of Armenia's direct involvement in the occupation of Azerbaijan's territories and its effective control over those territories as the occupying Power. The events of early April proved that in the absence of meaningful negotiations, reliance on the fragile ceasefire regime is a miscalculation. The withdrawal of Armenian troops would allow political issues related to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict to be addressed.

Azerbaijan calls on the international community to demand that Armenia cease the illegal occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, withdraw its troops from all seized lands and engage constructively in the conflict-settlement process in accordance with the requirements of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the norms and principles of international law.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.